Commentary on Acts of the Apostles by Oecumenius

Translated by John Litteral

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Commentary 3

INTRODUCTION

Oecumenius is a sixth century Greek Early Church Father who wrote commentaries on most of the New Testament with the exception of the four Gospels. Not everyone agrees that the author of the commentary on Revelation that is attributed to Oecumenius is the same author who wrote commentaries on Acts-Jude. I have translated the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius as well as many of the other commentaries, and I feel strongly that it is the same author for all. For many years it was thought that Oecumenius was a bishop of Tricca in ancient Thessaly, while many scholars these days think that he was a layperson from Isauria in Asia Minor.

This commentary on Acts of the Apostles by Oecumenius has been written in large part in the manner of a catena, that is, much of the commentary are excerpts from other writers and Bible commentators that came before Oecumenius, while there are parts of the commentary that appears to be from Oecumenius himself; and there are also rephrased and abbreviated content from other writers, especially John Chrysostom. Most catenae have the names of the sources beside each excerpt, but this work on Acts does not have the names beside the excerpts in any of the Greek copies. But I added the sources of the excerpts of this commentary in those places where Oecumenius shares the same content as found in another ancient collection of excerpts that was published by J.A. Cramer, often referred to as Cramer's Catena[1]. I did not do an extensive search to add sources to all sections of the Oecumenius commentary, but I did find a lot of matches for the section of chapters 8-28. Oecumenius relied heavily upon John Chrysostom, though often not quoting him word for word, but condensing and rewording.

Starting with chapter eight of this commentary, the excerpts used by Oecumenius are very similar to Cramer's Catena. The version by Oecumenius is more concise and condensed, and often rephrased in parts. But the earlier chapters of this commentary are significantly different than Cramer's Catena, being independent in nearly all aspects. Oecumenius used different sources in chapters 1-7 than what was used in Cramer's Catena, especially using excerpts from 1st century historian Josephus. In chapters 8-28, Oecumenius used lots of John Chrysostom and Ammonius[2], also Cyril of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Severus of Antioch, Eusebius, and to a lesser degree Severian of Gabala, Evagrius Ponticus, Theodore of Hereclea, Theodoret of Cyrus, Julian, 2 Clement, Isidore of Pelusium, Origen of Alexandria, Hesychius of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Irenaeus of Lyons, Apollinaris of Laodicea, etc.

Translator Footnotes

1. J.A. Cramer's Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum (1838–1844) is an 8-volume collection of Greek patristic commentaries, with Volume 3 specifically covering the Acts of the Apostles.

2. Ammonius's commentary on the Acts of the Apostles is a lost work that survives only in fragments within later catenae. Relatively little is known about Ammonius of Alexandria (5th-6th century) apart from his service as presbyter in the Alexandrian and church and his brief literary fragments. This being the case, he has often been confused with an earlier Ammonius from Alexandria, the neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius Saccas (3rd century CE). According to Minge, around the year 458 CE Ammonius may have written letters for the bishops of Egypt to Pope Leo concerning the Council of Chalcedon. He did, however, have an inclination for writing Biblical commentaries, as fragments from his works on the Psalms, Daniel, John, Luke, Acts, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Peter remain extant.

COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BY OECUMENIUS

Summary of the book of Acts

The book is called The Acts of the Apostles, because it contains the acts of the apostles together; and the one who narrates these is Luke the Evangelist, who also wrote this book. This man, being from Antioch by birth and a physician by profession, accompanied the apostles, especially Paul; and knowing everything precisely, he writes. In it, he recounts how, with the help of angels, the Lord was taken up, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred on Pentecost upon the apostles and all those present at that time; the appointment of Matthias in place of Judas the traitor; the appointment of the seven deacons; the selection of Paul, and all that he suffered; and all the miracles performed by the apostles through prayer and faith in Christ; and finally, his journey to Rome [that of Paul].

The names of the twelve apostles are these: Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, who was called Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Jesus. But Judas the traitor having fallen away and died, Matthias was appointed by the apostles and was numbered with the eleven apostles instead of the traitor, making twelve. The names of the deacons appointed by the apostles are these: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas. After these, Paul, a chosen vessel, was also called and sent with Barnabas to preach about the Lord everywhere. The acts of these

apostles and deacons are narrated by Luke, and the signs performed by them; and these are the signs he relates:

1. Peter and John healed in the name of the Lord the man born lame, who was sitting at the Beautiful Gate. Chapter 3.

2. Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, for withholding part of the earnings of the promise to God, and they immediately died. Chapter 5.

3. The shadow of Peter, coming upon the sick, healed them. Chapter 5.

4. Stephen performed wonders and signs. Chapter 3.

5. Philip instructed the eunuch who was reading the prophet Isaiah, and baptized him. Chapter 8.

6. The same Philip in Samaria cast out many spirits, and the lame and paralyzed were healed by him. Chapter 8.

7. Paul, approaching Damascus, saw a vision and immediately became an evangelist. Chapter 9.

8. Peter healed Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years, in Lydda. Chapter 9.

9. Peter, praying in Joppa, raised Dorcas, also called Tabitha, from the dead. Chapter 9.

10. Peter saw a sheet coming down from heaven, full of all kinds of animals. Chapter 10.

11. Peter, while guarded and bound in prison, was released by an angel without the soldiers knowing; and Herod died a worm-eaten death. Chapter 12.

12. In Cyprus, Paul rebuked the magician Elymas, and the magician himself became blind. Chapter 13.

13. Paul healed a man lame from birth in Lystra in the name of the Lord. Chapter 14.

14. Paul was called from a vision to go to Macedonia. Chapter 15.

15. Paul cast out a spirit of Python from a woman in Philippi. Chapter 13.

15. Paul and Silas were imprisoned, and their feet were fastened in straps; at midnight there was an earthquake, and their chains were loosed. Chapter 13.

17. From Paul's body they brought handkerchiefs to the sick and those possessed by demons, and they were healed. Chapter 19.

18. Paul, in Troas, raised Eutychus who had fallen from a window and died, saying, "His soul is in him." Chapter 20.

19. As Paul sailed to Rome, he and all those with him were caught in a storm for fourteen days and nights; when all expected to die, the Lord stood by Paul and said to him, "Because of you, these men have been saved," and they were saved. Chapter 27.

20. When Paul was bitten by a snake after leaving the ship, all thought he would die; but when he suffered no harm, they considered him a god. Chapter 28.

21. Paul laid hands on the father of Publius, who was suffering from an infectious intestinal inflammation on the island, and healed him, and many others who were sick. Chapter 28.

AND ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Even though the book is titled Acts of the Apostles, it mostly contains the things concerning Paul; which Luke also knew precisely, being a fellow traveler with him and a companion, and having served him in many necessary ways. He necessarily began with the acts from the other apostles. For it would not have been possible otherwise to accurately narrate the history concerning Paul without the preceding history of the apostles. For where else would Paul have appeared harsh and savage toward the disciples before he came to preaching? And was there approval in his

consent to the killing of his cousin Stephen? And his unexpected calling and turning toward those previously persecuted? And the danger on behalf of the persecuted? These things also caused the Jews to persecute him throughout his life and madly compelled him to be delivered from them. None of these things would have been known to us if not for the preceding history of the apostles. Moreover, even if it began with Paul himself, it was absolutely necessary to make a digression in order to teach the events that happened to him; and therefore the speaker of the narrative was interrupted, burdened with many things; apart from these, nothing clear was said concerning Paul. So that the account concerning him might be clear and not burdensome, he began indeed with the common narrative about the apostles; but when he advanced to the story about Paul, this account became Luke's own, and leaving aside the others, he confines himself solely to the one from the beginning. He did not write the end of Paul's story, nor his second journey to Nero; although Paul was then also present, while Paul himself was writing, saying that Luke is the only one with me (2 Tim. 4:11); or because it was not appropriate for him to undertake a history of the whole, but only so much as to show the bringing of Paul to Christ, and what he accomplished. Or was there not time to bring to completion what was intended from the beginning? For there was much disorder at the beginning caused by the persecutors pressing upon the Lord's disciples. Even though this present book promises to recount the acts of the apostles from the beginning, as we mentioned above, it contains more clearly the work of the Holy Spirit. For indeed, as the apostles lived among them, we come to know through this book the extraordinary things accomplished through them, that is, by the Spirit working through them. But also through this book the prophecies of Christ are revealed clearly. For the saying "You will do greater things than these," (Jn. 14:12) through the shadow of the apostles working miracles (Acts 5:19), and through the signs and wonders performed, is without end. Therefore, it is fitting that the Gospel

recounts the deeds of Christ; but the book of Acts, those of the Holy Spirit.

Collected from various ancient holy men by Oecumenius and carefully compiled into a summary, on the Acts of the Apostles.

CHAPTER 1

On the teaching of Christ concerning the resurrection, and the appearance to the disciples; and concerning the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, both in vision and in the manner of Christ's ascension; and concerning His glorious second coming.

Acts 1:1-2 ***In the first account, O Theophilus, I have made a record of all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.***

He spoke first of the word, not the Gospel, although Paul calls his own the gospel when he says: According to my gospel (2 Tim. 2:8); for the splendid flee everywhere; just as Matthew also, saying Book, of the genealogy (Matt. 1:1). But if Mark says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," (Mark 1:1) but does not call his own writing a gospel, rather the proclamation of Christ; For the beginning of the preaching of Christ is the development from the baptism of John. But the beginning of the revelation of the mystery according to Christ and His incarnation is the birth from the Virgin, and all that follows. Matthew was the first to

make use of the family records, and Luke himself also, which the faithful afterward rightly called Gospels, as the true gospel, that is, containing the teaching of Christ. As for having *made a record of all*, it seems to contradict the evangelist John, if he says that it is not possible to write everything; for the world could not contain the books that would be written (Jn. 21:25). Luke says that the account concerning all things was made from the beginning until the ascension. What then do we say? That concerning all these things he says nothing is left out, none of those things that make up the divine nature and truth of the proclamation. For John himself also dealt with all these things. For he omitted nothing of those things by which both the economy of the Word according to the flesh is believed and recognized, and the majesty according to his divinity shines forth and is revealed.

O Theophilus. This Theophilus was a governor. Do not be amazed if, for the sake of one man, Luke took such great care as to write two entire treatises; for he was also a guardian of the Master's voice who said: It is not the will of my Father that one of these little ones should perish. (Matt. 18:14)

to do and teach. He says that he who suffered also performed miracles. Or that he encouraged through what he was doing.

until the day. The following: *Until the day he was taken up*; the rest are inserted by way of parenthesis. As for, Having commanded the apostles through the Holy Spirit, either because the commands are spiritual, showing nothing worldly; or, so that the Spirit also may show itself as inherent to itself, that nothing performed by God lacks the sanctifying essence. But what are the commands? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19) *He was taken up*, it is said, no, He ascended; for still he speaks of him as of a man..

Acts 1:3a ***By which he also showed himself alive, after suffering, in many proofs.***

Jesus was taken up, so that no one would think that this happened by the power of another, and he immediately brought also the authority from his own power; to whom he also presented himself alive. Showing that same one as both having suffered and having risen, he convinced with the word, *after suffering*.

Acts 1:3b ***for forty days.***

He said it was *forty days*, not in consecutive days; for he did not spend time with them continuously, as before the passion, but intermittently, at once preparing for them a more longing appearance of himself, and at the same time revealing a more exalted and divine appearance of himself.

Acts 1:3c ***appearing to them.***

For whose sake did he not appear to all, but only to the apostles? Because it would have seemed like a ghost [φάντασμα] to the many, who did not know the secret of the mystery. For even if the disciples themselves did not believe at first and were disturbed, what was likely to happen to the many? Therefore, through the signs which the apostles received the grace to perform, he gives an unquestionable demonstration of the resurrection, and one exposed to all: so much so that the resurrection would be revealed not only to those who were then present by his very appearance, but also to all later generations. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 1:3d ***And speaking about the kingdom of God.***

From this we learn that even after the resurrection Jesus was teaching the disciples.

<u>Acts 4:1a</u> ***And dining together.***

Consuming and drinking, that is, sharing salt, sharing the table.

<u>Acts 1:4b</u> ***He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise from the Father.***

Not to depart from Jerusalem, Jesus encouraged them, wishing to establish the account of the resurrection more firmly for them through the miracles, which were done by the request of the crucified one, through the sufferings which they endured at the hands of the Jews, yet they did not depart from the friendship of the crucified and risen one, but rather died for him. For if they had immediately separated from Jerusalem, and nothing followed from them, the resurrection would have been suspicious. Likewise, many were about to trust there. At the same time, it was necessary to wait for them, so that some would not say that, having left their associates, they came to boast among strangers. And also, not yet having been armored with the power of the Spirit, they would become useless against the entanglements of their opponents.

the promise of the Father. And where did the Father promise this? We say, then, that either through omission, from the preposition "*from*," the expression must be understood so that it means, *to wait for the promise from the Father*, which I made to you of the Holy Spirit; or also that, as he himself says, what I have heard from the Father, these things I proclaim to you. And the promise of the Holy Spirit, although it came through Him, was also from the Father. And if you seek the Spirit from Him, Joel guarantees the

word to be trusted, saying, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 2:28)

Acts 1:4c ***You have heard me.***

When did they hear? When he said: It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you (Jn. 16:7); and again: I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Advocate (Jn. 14:16). But if the Spirit had not yet come, how could he say, "Receive the Holy Spirit"? (Jn. 20:22) Either because he said this, making them receptive and suitable for receiving the Spirit; and they received it when he descended; or because he spoke of the future as if it were already present; or because the giving of the Spirit is both purifying and perfecting. Therefore, the perfecting and completing descent of the Spirit upon the apostles, so as to perfect others as well, occurred at the time of Pentecost; it did not come while he was present; for if he had departed and it remained, the comfort would not have been so great; for they held on to it very firmly and inseparably. But the Spirit did not descend immediately, but after about eight or nine days, so that, having been somewhat discouraged, and having come to desire and need the promise, they might receive the joy at the presence pure and complete. Otherwise, it was necessary for our nature to appear in heaven, and for the reconciliations to be completed, and then for the Spirit to come. Consider, so that after the ascension they might not flee again, how this expectation holds them all there like a certain bond. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 1:5a ***For John baptized with water.***

At first, the apostles were baptized with water; but afterward also with the Holy Spirit. Here clearly already the one who surpasses

John presents himself, not as when he said: "The lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John." (Matt. 11:11)

<u>Acts 1:5b</u> ***But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.***

You will be baptized, he said, but not I will baptize, embracing meekness and fleeing arrogance: especially since John had previously taught this, saying: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire," (Matt. 3:11) it would be unnecessary for him to add this himself. But does he baptize without water by the grace from above? Certainly; for the principal thing is the Spirit, of which the water is also an effect, since Christ himself was also anointed without oil.

<u>Acts 1:6</u> ***Then those gathered asked him, saying, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"***

Look here. Since before the passion they asked about the end of the world, they no longer ask about this, but about the earthly *kingdom*; for they were still less complete. And having come together, they asked, so that they might confuse the crowd. But having heard before the passion that no one knows the day (Matt. 24:36), yet even now they ask again. For when they heard that they were about to receive the Spirit, as worthy ones, they wished to learn more and desired to be freed from hardships. They did not ask, "When?" but rather, "Is it *at this time*? Is it now?" they said. Therefore they longed for the day! But it seems to me that it was not even possible for them to fully grasp what *the kingdom* was at that time. For the Spirit had not yet taught. And they said, *You restore*; for they imagined something greater concerning it. Therefore He also spoke to them plainly. For He did not say, Not even the Son knows; but, *It is not for you to know*. And so that

they would not be discouraged, He added; But you will receive power, and the things that follow (Acts 1:8). And they did not ask about the end, but He Himself, who was not asked, teaches: that it is the mark of a good teacher not to teach what the students want, but what it is beneficial to learn. Therefore, He did not answer the question as if it had no value; rather, He taught what was urgent, for they especially needed the Spirit at that time.

Acts 1:7a ***He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons."***

Everywhere there is a barrier of knowledge separating them from what is to come, not as if they are ignorant, but as if they gain nothing from this knowledge concerning salvation of the soul; therefore he speaks to them vaguely and more generally: "But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5) If you ask, "Why then does the Spirit not descend immediately, or does this not also indicate a delay?" Learn that the Spirit does not come immediately after the ascension, so as to make the reception of it more eagerly desired; not on a definite day, but making them more earnest and more fittingly prepared for the coming.

Acts 1:7b ***which the Father appointed to his own authority.***

It must be noted whether this statement brings any importance to those wishing to remove the certain limit or fate of human affairs. For to say, "*which the Father appointed to his own authority*," abolishes fate. But if the father has placed, it is clear that the son also; for all things that belong to the Father also belong to the Son.

<u>Acts 1:8</u> ***But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.***

Since before this he commanded: Do not go on the way of the Gentiles (Matt. 10:5), and the following things: for he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel; now with these, the preaching is shared also with the Samaritans and the other nations. At the same time, Jesus foretells that the word of holiness will be preached throughout the whole world. For what else does "*to the ends of the earth*" signify?

<u>Acts 1:9a</u> And having said these things, while they were watching, he was taken up;

And having said these things, while they were watching, Jesus was taken up; leading them to another place on the shore, so that they would not question him again, he immediately began his ascent into heaven. And he adds, *while they were watching*: since here the whole beginning of their faith and need was established, but not the end of the matter. For this reason also the angels explained that Jesus rests in heaven; for they were unable to see him that far away. In the resurrection, however, it was the opposite: the beginning indeed was not seen by them; for it would have been unnecessary, since the one who had risen appeared alive, and the tomb was empty; but the end was apparent, for the living one was revealed to them.

<u>Acts 1:9b</u> ***And a cloud received him out of their sight.***

Indeed, *a cloud received* the Lord, to demonstrate the equality of honor to the Father. For it is said of the Father: A cloud and

darkness are round about Him. (Ps. 97:2) And indeed God who became flesh, having used a cloud as a chariot, for He was the Lord: but Elijah, fire. (2 Kings 2:1) For Jesus, being the Master of all, and ascending by his own power, takes a somewhat earthly and lower path toward the ascent, not being carried but carrying the vehicle; but Elijah is a servant, and therefore needing an unprofitable chariot and horses, the speed of which aids him in the upward journey. Therefore, it is said of him: Elijah went up in a whirlwind as into heaven; but of the Lord it is said, As He was going up into heaven. Two white-haired men are attested to confirm the Lord's restoration into heaven, "a matter is established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (2 Cor. 13:1)

<u>Acts 1:10</u> ***And as they were gazing into heaven while he was going, behold, two men stood by them in white garments.***

Men, appearing as angels because of the vision, speak through the experience, according to the kindred nature of the vision, so that they do not completely astonish those already struck by the uniqueness of the ascension.

<u>Acts 1:11a</u> ***They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?"***

Men spoke to *men*, yet they were not similar in substance.

<u>Acts 1:11b</u> ***This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.***

So that the disciples might not be disturbed, and as the teacher had departed, and his body was being taken from them, they would not thereby become hopeless of the expectation of him, and for this reason be scattered elsewhere by faint-heartedness and fear; for this cause the angels present themselves, declaring to them his ascent into heaven, and the abiding and salvation of the body that had been taken up, by which they say: This Jesus will therefore come again. And by saying, *Why do you stand*? they admonish them, freeing them from that preoccupation, to come to Jerusalem, according to the command of the Lord, namely, Do not depart from Jerusalem. Therefore, when they arrived, still fearful because of the teacher's absence, they did not return to the city but went up to the upper room, as to a safer and more hidden place. Chrysostom says that the ascension took place on the day of the Sabbath. Therefore the phrase "a sabbath day's journey away" (Acts 1:12) is noted, so that they might not seem to have been using more of the ordinance from the law on the Sabbath by walking.

<u>Acts 1:12</u> ***Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.***

One mile, which was the distance of the Sabbath's journey, as Origen[1] says in the fifth Homily, was two thousand cubits. And moreover the holy tent and the ark occupied this same space before the encampment, and from that distance they encamped. The distance permitted those who worshipped the holy tent to walk on the Sabbath.

<u>Acts 1:13-14</u> ***And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter and***

James and John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. All these were continually devoting themselves with one accord to prayer and supplication, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Peter, interpreting or knowing: *James*, supplanter of labor. *John*, by the grace of God: *Andrew*, becoming powerful or condemned: *Philip*, the mouth of widows or the mouth of the lamp: *Thomas*, the abyss or twin or doubting. *Bartholomew*, son of him who suspends waters: *Matthew*, gifted: *James son of Alphaeus*, supplantation. *Simon the Zealot*, discipline of life: *Judas son of James*, he was also called Thaddeus. He names the disciples individually to show that, since they had fallen away at the time of the passion, Judas indeed completely cast himself out from the band of the apostles. But Peter agreed, and through the threefold question was summoned back to the Teacher. And if John is recorded among the same as taking the Mother of Christ, yet with John present to the apostles, she herself was also present.

In another way. He does not compile a list of the disciples in vain: but wishing to show that they had suffered something human, yet had not remained in apostasy. For indeed Peter, who had denied, was absolved from his denial by bitter tears, as is made evident from this, that shortly afterwards the spiritual flock was entrusted to him. Thomas, who had been unbelieving, was healed of his unbelief when the wounds and the side were touched with his hands. Therefore, although all the others were present together, Judas alone was missing. And Mary, Mother of God, was present, as indeed was John, who had received her into his house, and the brothers were present. What if Joseph, the bridegroom, had been alive, certainly he would also have been present: especially he, who, when his sons doubted, never doubted concerning the

privilege. But it is clear that he had long since died: for he himself was not then present, when his kinsmen wished to see Jesus teaching. For what does he say? "Your mother and your brothers are seeking you outside," (Matt. 12:47) nor is it added: "And your father."

A brief dialogue addressed to the disciples concerning the death and mission of Judas the betrayer; in which, concerning the substitution of Matthew, it was appointed by the grace of God through prayer.

Acts 1:15 ***And in those days Peter, having risen, stood in the midst of the disciples and said: and there was a multitude together in one place, about one hundred and twenty.***

Then Peter arose, not James, and as if more zealous, and as one to whom the leadership of the disciples had been entrusted. Moreover James was modest, more suited to speech and quiet, while the others handled affairs. Therefore they yield the seat[2] [καθέδρας] of Jerusalem to him. But see how he acts by common decree in all things, and not from primacy nor by his own authority. One hundred and twenty were together present of those who had believed in the Lord. For indeed there were seventy, and five hundred whom Paul says he saw the Lord after he had risen[3]. (1 Cor. 15:6) But it is likely that these were among those who had been more approved and were more fervent in speaking freely.

Acts 1:16a ***Brothers, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, as the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David.***

Peter consoles them with prophecy. Nor does he say: As David said, but the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David. What then were these? Whatever the one hundred and eighth psalm contains:

of which he will also make mention after a little bit. Speaking of Judas, however, he treats the matter both temperately and without vilification. For he does not say "the accursed, the filthy one," but simply indicates what happened. And having introduced the phrase, "This man therefore acquired a field with the wages of unrighteousness," (Acts 1:18) and that becoming prone he was rent, or, as some read, "was split," he did not refer the keeping of it to Judas. For he himself did not buy the field, but the priests, from the silver thrown down by him in the temple[4]. Since, then, these things are the wage of Judas' betrayal, the acquisition is also reckoned to him. And again, since this has been destined for burial, Scripture is fulfilled: "his habitation be desolate." (Ps. 69:25; Acts 1:20) For what is more desolate than a grave? By saying that "and having fallen headlong he burst open in the middle," it showed that, together with the act of betrayal, he had brought about this end through excessive disregard and slackness born of indifference. And when they say that he used a rope and hung himself, the sacred Gospels also record that if he now fell forward and everything that follows, there is no contradiction. For both happened: the cord by which the hanging occurred broke, and therefore he was carried forward onto the ground and had fallen. And insofar as these things are related about him some days later, it is thereby confirmed that they happened immediately after the betrayal.

Acts 1:16-20 ***Concerning Judas, who became the guide to those who arrested Jesus, for he was numbered among us and had obtained the lot of this ministry. This man therefore acquired a field with the wages of unrighteousness, and having fallen headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all who dwelt in Jerusalem, so that that field was called in their own dialect Akeldama, that is,***

Field of Blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms: Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one dwell in it; and let another take his oversight. (Ps. 109:8)

Judas did not die by hanging, but survived, having been crushed before being strangled. This is indicated by the Acts of the Apostles, which say that, having fallen forward, he burst open in the middle. This is narrated more clearly by Papias[5], a disciple of the apostle John, who says: "An example of great sin walked in this world in Judas. For having been pressed upon his flesh to such an extent that he could not pass through, as a wagon passed over him he was pressed by the wagon, so that his guts were emptied." *[APOLLINARIS OF LAODICEA]*

In another way. "For his flesh had swollen to such an extent that not even where a wagon easily passes could one pass him, nor was it only the swelling of the head. For they say the eyelids of his eyes had so become blinded that he did not at all see the light. Nor could his eyes be seen even by a medical lens, they were so deep from the outer surface; and his genitals appeared more loathsome and larger than anything shameful. And they say that from it there issued, from all parts of the body, corruptions and worms in abundance, by them alone of necessity. And after many tortures and punishments, they say he died in his own place, and because of the smell the village became deserted and uninhabited until the present. But not even today could anyone cross that place unless he stopped up his nostrils with his hands." *[APOLLINARIS OF LAODICEA]*

And Luke here records immediately the suffering of Judas. For the souls of the weaker are most disgraced by present things. He increased not the sin, calling him a traitor, but the punishment, because he endured this and that in full detail. And the place called *Akeldama* was not named by Judas, but by the Jews. For he says, *in their own dialect*, the Jews bearing witness to the lawlessness.

<u>Acts 1:21-25</u> ***It is therefore necessary, with us assembled as men in all the time during which the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which he was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with you of his resurrection. And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And having prayed they said, "You, Lord, who knows the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen to take the lot of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away to go to his own place."***

Peter announces to them, so that the matter may not become a subject of bitter contest, and that they may not fall into quarreling. For this reason he also begins, "Men, brothers," he says, "it is necessary to choose from among you, entrusting the decision to the multitude, and at the same time making the chosen ones respectable, and freeing himself from hate toward the others." And that which needed to happen, he even introduces by quoting the prophet: "Another will take his office." (Ps. 109:8) But from whom must he be chosen? From those who, by their assembly with them, have shown themselves tried over time. Therefore he did not even say "from the respectable," so as not to seem to insult the others.

Having begun he added: "*From the baptism of John*." For concerning this, none of them knew, having learned and being present, except only the one chosen; but the Spirits perceived. And he declared him a witness of the resurrection. For this is above all the chief point of Jesus' divinity. Since also regarding his miracles before the passion, many were witnesses and even the unbelieving who had seen them. And they hastened to fill up the number of the apostles, for fear that the teacher's choice be as if harmed. They

did not, however, appoint many, but only two alone, so that greater hopelessness would not arise from many being passed over.

Barsabbas and *Joseph* and *Justus*, either names of distinction or of zeal. They call him a discerner of hearts at the right time; and they do not say, "Choose," but, "Appoint the one *chosen*." For all things are known and the best are with God, and before our considerations. And he calls it an inheritance, showing the whole of God's love and choice, and recalling the ancients, that he likewise allotted the Levites in this way.

Specifically, he says, "*In this ministry*," for there were also others. And he calls his own place the gallows, that is, the one for which Judas prepared himself by his betrayal. Or because Judas was cast out, he might have his own place, receiving the office that belonged to him.

<u>Acts 1:26</u> ***And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias: and by the votes he was added to the eleven apostles.***

Since they are not yet perfected, they learn who is worthy by *lot* and not by miracle. Yet it should not be faulted that it is done by lot. For if the lot had power concerning Jonah when rejected and profane men cast lots, (Jonah 1:7) what then must be thought when they permit the saints to prayer? Indeed, if only the right mind of those men rightly directed the matter, much more so that of divine men.

Translator notes for Acts chapter 1.

1. Origen, De Principis 4.2.17. And therefore those who belong to the circumcision, and all who desire that no meaning should be exhibited, save the literal one, do not in-vestigate at all such subjects as those of

the goat-stag and griffin and vulture, but indulge in foolish talk on certain points, multiplying words and adducing tasteless traditions; as, for example, with regard to the Sabbath, saying **that two thousand cubits is each one's limit**.

2. “seat” [καθέδρας]. Origin: The word "cathedra" refers to the official seat (throne) of a bishop.

3. 1 Cor. 15:6 says, After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

4. While Matthew 27:7 states the chief priests bought the field with the returned money, Acts 1:18 attributes the purchase to Judas, as it was bought with his money.

5. In Cramer’s Catena for Matt. 27 and Acts 1, this tradition from Papias is attributed to Apollinaris of Laodicea.

CHAPTER 2

On the divine coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost upon those who had believed, in which also Peter’s teaching from the prophets is contained, namely concerning the passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit: concerning the faith and salvation of those who were present through baptism, concerning unity that is for the common good, and the addition of those believing.

Acts 2:1-3 ***And when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like that of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues.***

"*when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled*." That is, at Pentecost, about that feast itself, when the season of spiritual ripeness brings the sickle[1], when because of the feast many of those who had crucified him were present, and in order that they might receive the reproach for their own murder.

Suddenly a sound and not invisibly the descent of *the Spirit*, and *from heaven*, so that it might strike the assembled with greater astonishment and raise them up, and make ready to gather *all together*. And with sensation, so that the wonder may be made undeniable. For even if, after this, the marvel should fall into drunkenness, what would I not say if it had not happened in this way?

And *from heaven* with great force. For he wishes to show this by a forceful blast, in order to indicate that the work belongs to him who has been taken up into the heavens, and to the divine power; just as on the Red Sea the violent south wind. And rightly in all these things he uses things by way of comparison, as, I say, and *as* if *of fire*, so that nothing perceptible may be thought concerning the *Spirit*. And the whole house was filled with the Breath, filling it up like a baptismal font, since he had also promised them: "You will be baptized in the Spirit and in fire." (Matt. 3:11) And of abundance this is proof, and of intensity. But fire did not fill the house, so that it would not terrify everyone and prepare those who saw to flee, bearing witness to none of the things that afterward occurred.

The Spirit is distributed as *tongues of fire*, and rests upon *each one* individually, obviously upon the one hundred and twenty who were also present in the house. For the grace of the Paraclete, though from one root, was being portioned into diverse gifts. And a tongue was needed to proclaim the great things of God, consuming every opposing thing like fire. *Fire* in form, because the Spirit is God, and so that thereby He might reveal the likeness

to the Father, who therefore appears to Moses on the bush. (see Ex. 3:2) And He sits upon each one individually, indicating stability and permanence.

For 'He *sat* down,' it signifies that He remained and ceased again. It means that concerning John it was about to be known to one man, as a dove is seen coming upon the head of Christ. (see Jn. 1:32) But when the whole multitude was to be turned, like fire. And what the Hebrews from old used to think about God, that He is consuming fire. (see Heb. 12:29, Deut. 4:24) Yet also when the disciples persevered in prayer and supplication, and in mutual love, then the guiding Spirit came upon them.

Acts 2:4-5 ***As the Spirit enabled them to speak. For they were utterances which they were proclaiming in various tongues. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem devout Jews, men from every nation under heaven.***

That *devout* ones show that, having left their homelands and forsaken possessions and houses, they chose to dwell *in Jerusalem*, so that according to the ancestral law they might offer to God three times in the year.

Acts 2:6-12 ***When this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused, because each one heard them speaking in his own dialect. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how do we each hear them in our own native language in which we were born: Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews***

and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we hear them speaking in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

The multitude was *perplexed* or disturbed, for reasonably they supposed that wondrous things were being shown to them, on account of the bold deeds done concerning Christ, and conscience troubled their souls. And some were murderous in this way; but the devout ones were amazed, recognizing them as *Galileans* yet hearing them speak in their *native* tongues.

But the apostles knew what they were saying, namely *the mighty works of God*; as for the languages, they did not know them, except that the men who heard were devout, for example some *Scythian* by chance, or an *Indian* who understood the Scythian, or that the apostles spoke in the dialect of the Indians.

Acts 2:13 ***Others, mocking, said that they were full of sweet wine.***

There were also some of those who understood, perhaps the baser sort, mocking the rites as if they were the products of drunkenness; for if they had not understood, they would not have attributed the matter to drunkenness. But if they understood what was being said, you will ask, how did they dare to mock? Yet malice, arising from excessive wickedness, is nothing other than sheer perversion, so that, finding nothing else, it rips the present affair into whatever it can. As when Christ performed miracles, they had no doubt about the power at work, yet the thing was madly ascribed to Beelzebul. And nations are remembered as enemies of the Jews, Cretans, Arabs, and others, who, speaking in their tongues, afforded a sign that they would hold by faith; and everywhere wickedness

accompanies virtue. The devout ones marveled, but the others mocked. See, then, the folly of those who mock.

They say *they are full with sweet wine*. And yet it was not the season for that. For it was Pentecost, when there is no sweetness. For the sweetness chiefly is the sweet-flowing wine from the very press. But it was also the third hour, at which one is unlikely to become drunk, and especially when people are in danger and fear. Therefore they label the whole according to its kind, saying, "*they were full of sweet wine*." For the blunt speech seeks only one thing, to say anything at all, not how to say something with sense. The more astonishing thing was that, though those who marveled and confessed were Jews, Romans, proselytes, and almost all the nations proclaimed that they were speaking in their own languages, yet some were found *mocking*.

In another way. To claim that the apostles were filled with *sweet wine* is to slander them with regard to their character. For "*sweet wine*" is the sweet kind of wine, which is also more inclined to make one drunk, and by the slipperiness of its sweetness causes a more copious filling of the cavities of the brain with the vaporous exhalation. Did those who laughed at what was said understand it, or not? For if they did not understand, their mockery would have no point, for why should someone be grievously upset over a meaningless, senseless babble offered at random? But it is clear that they did understand, and that those who were cast into wonder held this matter in contempt. They themselves wickedly persistently snooped about it, as is the habit of wrongdoers.

In another way. They understood, but they were not pleased with what was said. For the speaker was attributing great works to God. For it is the custom of many, when they do not like what is said, to regard the speaker as demon-possessed or deranged. Therefore, also in the case of Christ: they understood the miracles and that he

ought to be praised, but they slandered him as it being done by Beelzebul. (see Mark 3:22-30)

<u>Acts 2:14</u> ***Then Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea, and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words."***

In the foregoing passages indeed Peter shows concern, when he allows the multitude the choice of him who was to be appointed with the eleven; here, however, openness. And he does this not having friendly listeners, but mocking and scoffing and shouting: moreover he himself was unlearned and uneducated. How then would what was done not be for a man? that is, to utter a voice.

He says "*with the eleven*," indicating that by common will and voice he was the voice of all: for the eleven stood as witnesses of the things that were to be spoken.

And he *raised his voice*, that is, he spoke with great freedom of words, so that they might immediately perceive from the outset the grace of the Spirit. For he who before this time did not bear the question of a slave girl, (see Jn. 18:17) here in the midst of the people, with all crying out, preaches so unwavering that this is unquestionably a sign of the resurrection.

<u>Acts 2:15a</u> ***For they are not, as you suppose, drunk.***

Peter did not say, “As you mock,” but, “*as you suppose*,” treating the statement more gently; and not wishing to show them openly as wicked by saying this, but warning them toward repentance and regret.

<u>Acts 2:15b-21</u> ***For there is the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Yes, and upon my servants and upon my handmaids in those days will I pour out of my Spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord shall come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

For Peter says, "*It is the third hour of the day*." And what of that? Is it not at the third hour that one becomes drunk? Certainly, that was not in accordance with their intention: for they did not truly think that of them, but said it while jeering and mocking. He made them formerly more careful; but these things happened at *the third hour*, not simply. For then the brilliance of the fire is shown, when men are neither at work nor at their meal, when the day is bright, when all are in the marketplace. Then he brought forward the prophecy of Joel, nowhere mentioning Christ here, and of the signs of which they were eyewitnesses, or that this had been his promise. For if he had said this, he would have overturned everything and exposed it to scorn; but he first introduces the Father who had promised these things to them *through the prophet*, and removes the envy; not, he says, to the apostles only, but to every flesh, clearly to those believing sincerely, and with character. For he does not mean the one who says to me, he says, "Lord, Lord," (Matt. 7:21) but the one living a life of the best sort and doing this. He does not add this, making the word of the promise

more burdensome and making it light, because the request alone suffices for salvation.

Now, "*The sun shall be turned into darkness*," and the preceding, "*blood and fire and vapor of smoke*," these refer to the coming judgment. More appropriately and specifically they speak of Jerusalem and its then captivity, as is shown by the nature of those suffering. Likewise, according to Josephus[2], many such things foreshadowed the destruction of Jerusalem. That the *moon* is said to be *turned into blood* signifies the excess of slaughter, being nearer to the earth and able to suffer this from the exhalation of blood. As for, "*before the great and notable day of the Lord shall come*," is terrifying and alarming because of the expected dangers. For he says, do not be confident in the fact that you now sin with liberty; but know that these are preludes to that great and dangerous retribution of deeds which will follow, adding, "And everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) For Paul the apostle says this was said concerning Christ: but now, since there is no opportunity for that here, in a certain exemption of speech he postponed this.

Acts 2:22-28 ***Men of Israel, listen to these words. To you was delivered Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know; and though you had him in the set purpose and foreknowledge of God, you delivered him up and denied him by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, releasing the pangs of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it. For David says of him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh also will dwell in***

hope, because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will fill me with gladness with your presence."

Since Peter had urged them vehemently before, he now lets them go, not by flattering them, but by giving them rest and regarding them worthy of relief. Therefore he also makes a preface and recalls the forefather David, so that he might not alarm them, since he had introduced Jesus with his speech. For when they heard the prophet at his feet, they held back. And if merely the name of Jesus had been brought forward to people who kill, it would immediately have stood against them. For this reason he did not say "Be persuaded," but "*listen*." So that it might be more gently brought in. For this reason he also speaks more humbly concerning Jesus.

"*Jesus*, he said, "*of Nazareth*," that is, naming him from a low and despised homeland. Then, "*attested,*" not one about whom any doubt could be held, but demonstrated by the works '*which God did through him*," because he was from God. For although God worked, he worked through him, and '*to you*,' not secretly nor in a corner, but with you as witnesses.

Since they advanced in their daring by means of the cross, he also attempts to free them by saying, "*and foreknowledge of God*," at once showing that his suffering was voluntary and that he ministered to the predestined, but even while clearing them he does not entirely abandon the charge against them.

For he urges, saying, "*you delivered him up and denied him by the hands of lawless men*;" for it is through the hands of the lawless, namely Judas and the soldiers. For if indeed those who wandered were wicked, certainly those who killed were also so. And when he had therefore gradually rebuked them, taking up thereafter greater boldness he rebukes them more plainly, saying:

"*But God raised him up, releasing the pangs of death*." That is, that even death was afflicting and holding him with pangs, and in a manner he suffered terribly.

For the pains, the Old Testament declares dangers and misfortunes. As in the passage, "Pains of death encompass me." (Ps. 116:3) And by the phrase, "*because it was not possible that he should be held by it*," it presents his greatness, and that he no longer dies. On these matters he also cites the prophet David saying, as has been said before, not concerning himself, but concerning him, that is, Christ. And here from the humbler sayings, and in the humblest style he advanced the prophecy, being words of more introductory character. "*because it was not possible*." For he said himself, "No one takes my life from me. But I lay it down of my own accord, and I have power to take it again." (Jn. 10:18)

> **Acts 2:29-32** ***Men, brothers, I may speak freely to you concerning the patriarch David: that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that from the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. God raised up this Jesus, of whom all we are witnesses.***

Fulfilling the prophecy, Peter begins again with a different preface. "*Men*," he says, "*brothers*." For whenever one is about to say something of great importance, he employs a familiar preface, calling them brothers. As Stephen also: "Brothers and Fathers, listen." (Acts 7:2)

Then he says, "*I may speak freely to you concerning the patriarch David*." There is no harm there; he uses considerable moderation.

For if he had said so plainly that these things were not spoken concerning David, but concerning Christ, it would have seemed harsh, and would have provoked their anger rather than rendered them obedient. But giving much honor to the blessed David, he constructs an unacceptable argument, namely that the testimony concerns Christ, and in this way the whole passage is managed.

For he did not add to David's death and burial that he did not rise, but that "*his tomb is with us*," which is equivalent to "David did not rise."

And even so it did not apply to Christ; rather David is praised again by the phrase "*Being therefore a prophet*," so that through the honor paid to him and his offspring the one from him, they may accept the account concerning the resurrection of the Christ.

And he did not say that God had promised him, but it was greater and sacred, the, He *sworn*. But the phrase, "*did his flesh*," is proclaimed insofar as Christ is also God, and he always exists with the Father. And all things are committed to the Father, so that the things spoken may first be received. But how did he sit *upon the throne* of David? Because he reigns over all, both Jews and Gentiles being won over to his faith and worship. And the statement, "*nor did his flesh see corruption*," nonetheless indicates the work of the resurrection.

<u>Acts 2:33-34a</u> ***Having been exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this, which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens.***

And again Peter ascribes the event to the *Father*. For he knows that this will draw on the listeners. Having spoken, "*Having been exalted*," and having approached the matter of the ascension, and that he is in the heavens. Therefore he did not speak plainly,

saying that he is in the heavens. Since he proceeded so far, and remembered his signs and the resurrection, he next introduces, "*He has poured out*." For at first he was saying that this had been promised not about Christ but through Joel the prophet. But when he remembered the marvelous things concerning Christ, he now boldly says that he has poured him out. *[IRENAEUS OF LYONS]*

Therefore he was not speaking of the Father, saying "I will pour out," but of Christ. "Receiving the *promise*," he says, *from the Father*, or that which he himself promised to us the disciples, namely, "And I will send another Comforter to you," (Jn. 14:16) or that which the Father promised him before his passion, through the words, "And I glorified, and I will glorify again." (Jn. 12:28) He attributes the promise to the Father, shading the statement toward the listeners' easier acceptance. For whatever one might say, if it does not end in benefit, he speaks ineffectively and in vain. He therefore shows that the cross not only did not diminish him, but made him more glorious. For what the Father promised through John the Baptist before the cross, namely, "He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and with fire," (Matt. 3:11) he gave after the cross.

<u>Acts 2:34b-36</u> ***He himself says: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.***

He no longer speaks with withdrawal. For from what has been said he has confidence. But what does he say? That David says: "*The Lord said to my Lord*," and therefore shows him higher than David. And if David calls him Lord, much more will they not refuse him. And he sets before them a fear by the phrase, "*until I make your enemies*." And so that they may not disbelieve, he assigns the

submission to the Father. But he brings these great things back again to the humbler point: "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ*." The word "*has made*" instead of "has appointed and established," he says, but not instead of "has made essential." He might somehow have said "higher" concerning the Christ, and as applying to those present: "Therefore let all Israel know for certain, that he sits at the right hand of the Father."

<u>Acts 2:37-38a</u> ***When they heard this they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "What shall we do, brothers?" And Peter said to them.***

Peter's speech, moderated with gentleness, led them to regret. The phrase "*they were pierced*" (κατενύγησαν[3]), instead of "they were struck" (ἐπλήγησαν[4]), indicates that they suffered inwardly and judged themselves. Therefore they seek a remedy for the evil, and affectionately call them brothers, those whom they formerly mocked. The address "brothers" was not said out of equality, as if presenting themselves to them by such a form of address, but showing how they had grown fond of them. And since Peter, beginning his discourse, called them so, they also thereby had an occasion to call them in the same way.

<u>Acts 2:38b-42</u> ***Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you belongs the promise and to your children, and to all those who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call. With many other words he testified and encouraged, saying: Be saved from this crooked generation. Those who gladly received his word were baptized. And about three thousand souls***

were added that day. They continued faithfully in the apostles' teaching, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

As the mouth of all the apostles put forward, Peter says, *Repent and be baptized*, not believe, but, "*Be baptized*." For this is the foundation of those who believe in Christ. Therefore he requires this first, and after this he brings the end toward the foundation, saying "*the gift of the Holy Spirit*," as revealed through this faith. And by saying, "*For to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are far off,* and to those who are near," he indicates the greatness of the gift, that it is sufficient not only for them but also for their children. And it is bestowed upon the Gentiles as well. For he hinted at this by "*those who are far off*"; but if to those who are far off, then all the more to you who are near. Consider also that then he hinted at the faith of the Gentiles, when he found them humbled and having judged themselves. For when a soul condemns itself, it is no longer able to envy.

Acts 2:43-46a ***And there came upon every soul fear, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple.***

For they did not despise those who happened to be there, but because Peter was a great figure, flowing from above, and showing the things to come by his promises, they were rightly afraid. For the works bore witness to the word. Just as before with Christ there were first signs, then teaching, then miracles, so now also. As for selling and distributing *their possessions* according to whatever *need* one *had,* not merely, but in an economical manner. For they distributed according to value. And the phrase "*continued*

daily with one accord" does not mean one day, nor two, but *daily*, and with one soul. The believers attended *in the temple*, being more earnest, and having nothing else to be zealous about out of reverence for the place, or for the sanctuary. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 2:46b-47</u> ***Breaking bread in their homes, they took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.***

They now call the house the sacred one; for in it they used to eat. And the phrase "*breaking bread*" he said so that their simple and humble sustenance of life might be revealed. For when they were *breaking bread* they partook of *food*, but did not live luxuriously. Therefore, too they regulated their life by faith, and were mutually loving *with all the people*. For even if the chief priests rose up against them from envy, yet *they* had *favor with the people*. This was shown by their mercy and pure conduct. And the phrase "*with simplicity of heart*" instead of "in humility and lowliness," not thinking anything high about the things by which they practiced good deeds and acts of mercy, which was especially Jewish, as is clear from the boasting Pharisee. (see Luke 18:10-14)

Translator notes for Acts chapter 2.

1. Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), is a biblical, joyous festival celebrated 50 days after Passover, marking the peak of the wheat harvest when the first fruits are offered to God. It represents a season of spiritual ripeness, symbolizing the giving of the Torah and the empowerment of believers by the Holy Spirit to reap a harvest of souls, as seen with the 3,000 baptized in Acts 2.

2. Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, 6.1.1

3. The Greek word κατενύγησαν translates literally to "they were pierced" or "they were pricked".

4. While κατενύγησαν (above) refers to being "pierced" or "stung" emotionally/spiritually, ἐπλήγησαν typically refers to a more forceful, external "strike" or "blow," whether physical or as a catastrophic event.

CHAPTER 3

On the healing in Christ of the man lame from birth, and Peter's chosen catechesis, sympathetic, advisory, toward their salvation. In which is oversight of the chief priests with zeal over the event, and judgment of the miracle.

Acts 3:1 ***At the same time Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth.***

There was great unity and friendship between these two. For *Peter* here implies that the Lord's suffering was to be learned from the teacher, and again they ran together to the tomb, and concerning them Peter again says to Christ, "But what about this one?" (Jn. 21:21) They used to go up into the sanctuary, not any longer as those who observe Jewish customs, but appropriately and accommodatingly doing this, and so that when the lame man had been healed in the temple, they would have all who had seen it as witnesses. For many gathered there because of the reverence of the place. By indicating *the hour* he teaches that they were always attentive in their prayers. And he also mentions *the temple*, I say, relied on by both time and place for what he writes. And although many miracles were performed by the apostles, as Luke who wrote this also remembered above, he does not mention any of them by name, but he writes only that from which all began; for perhaps they overlooked those things as insignificant, or because this composition was undertaken by him not for the sake of flashiness.

<u>Acts 3:2-6a</u> ***And a man lame from his mother's womb was being carried, whom they placed daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful to ask alms from those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter, looking intently at him along with John, said, "Look at us." And he was eagerly awaiting to receive something from them. Then Peter said.***

How does he not say the name of the lame man? because even the apostles did not know him. For the man was entirely unknown to them. And this was so that they might not appear to be showing special favor, and making cures by effort, nor might any suspicion of hypocrisy be entertained even by the most shameless, that some acquaintances of the apostles were pretending the cures about them for the sake of favor from the apostles. How then did they not learn his name after the healing? Because they had no leisure to concern themselves with things that profit nothing. But why did they not bring him to be healed by Christ? Perhaps some of those attending the temple were unbelieving; moreover they did not even bring him to the apostles, having seen them entering and performing such miracles. That he was *lame from his mother's womb*, all who were in *the temple* knew. Therefore, since it was unmistakable that this was the case, they had no concern for the name of the Lord himself so as to tell us that they called him by that name, but only about his ailment and his designation: and this illness and suffering became for him a foremost and well-known sign. And when many miracles were performed by the apostles, as we have said, the Jews did not bring him to them, either because they envied Christ, or because of unbelief: for they did not yet think that so great a miracle could be worked.

<u>Acts 3:6b</u> ***I have neither silver nor gold; but what I do have I give to you.***

This demonstrates their complete lack of *gold*. For Peter does not say, as we often say, "I do not have it in this place or at this time," but rather, "*I have neither*," indicating that he possesses no *gold* at all.

<u>Acts 3:6c-10</u> ***In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And taking him by the right hand, he raised him. Immediately his ankles and feet were strengthened; and, leaping up, he stood and walked. And he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they recognized him, that he was the one who used to sit for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.***

Which *Christ* often, when healing those who are in a more imperfect state, did not only heal by word but also by touch, this now Peter likewise does. But also through *he raised him*, the mystery of the resurrection is demonstrated, and so that what happened should not seem to be from coincidence or winging it. He therefore rose, either because some doubted what had happened, and, testing, made the foundation firmer and more secure, or because he did not yet know how to walk. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

The phrase, "*they recognized him*," is appropriate, as if he were from this time ignorant of the miracle. The same also concerning the man born blind. (see Jn. 9:1) We, too, have been accustomed to use this expression with respect to those whom we have barely come to know.

"*Walking and leaping*." As if he were by now almost entirely unknown, who a little before had been so slow that he needed the help of others to move around.

<u>Acts 3:11-12a</u> ***While the man who had been lame was holding on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the porch called Solomon's, astonished. But when Peter saw it, he addressed the people.***

He held the apostles after the healing, either out of goodwill as weaving a praise for them, and showing them off to all as saviors, or suspecting that, if they were left, they would again be seized by passion. For he thought that he had been freed from the passion only until it seized them and clung to them, especially since Peter, having held him, had therefore healed him.

"*at the porch called*." This porch alone stood from the construction of *Solomon*. For Nebuchadnezzar set the temple on fire, and Cyrus the Persian rebuilt it[1].

<u>Acts 3:12b</u> ***Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why do you gaze at us, as though by our own power or devotion we had made him walk?***

The name *Israel* suggests two things to the understanding, namely the praise of Jacob which was assigned the name Israel because of his obedience to God, (see Gen. 32:28) being raised from lower things to higher, heavenly, divine and intelligible things; and the accusation of his seed since the exodus from Egypt, which could never be appeased, a people always provoking. He therefore gave them the name Israel from both these things: on the one hand, shame, because they did not obey God as their ancestor had done; on the other hand, ruin, because they left Egypt and were not

preserved to the promised inheritance. The remembrance of both, effected through the name, will on the one hand provide zeal, and on the other will cause imitation to flee from like destruction, by attention to what will be said. This discourse is moreover full of greater bluntness, not because it feared before, but because, being harsh and bold, those others would not have endured. From this beginning of that account Peter effects a turning back to them through the preface, saying, “let this be known to you, and give heed to my words” (Acts 2:14); but here he does not need such a construction. For I did not act gladly, but the sign of the lame man turned them all back, and filled them with fear and astonishment. See how by striking aside the glory about them through the signs he speaks nothing great about himself, since he humbles himself concerning the great deeds accomplished by him, thereby drawing the hearer more. Therefore, having despised human glory themselves, they rather glorified themselves, showing that what happened was not human but divine.

"*As by our own power*." Note the saying, that he says he was healed not by human power but by divine. Therefore the Nazarene is God, whose name healed him.

> **<u>Acts 3:13-15</u>** ***The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be granted to you; you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead, of whom we are witnesses.***

Peter remains still among the more humble, those around him and concerning Christ: concerning themselves, as if to say, not to perform miracles by their own private power; concerning Christ, to add the child; for it is not the self-glorified one who receives an

addition of glory. Having humbled both himself and Christ, he raises the boldness of the Jews against Christ, and no longer overshadows as before. He does this wishing rather to lead them on. For insofar as he showed them guilty, so much the more did this become so.

Through the words, "*whom you delivered up and denied*," there are two crimes. For to Pilate they delivered him to be killed, saying, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death;" (Jn. 18:31) and they denied him, crying out, "We have no king but Caesar." (Jn. 19:15) Yet even with Pilate being a Greek, having neither seen a sign from Christ nor heard prophets concerning Christ, and although he wished to release him, they themselves beheld Christ performing miracles, and, having stood as witnesses to the prophets' declarations concerning him, they would not endure it.

By saying, "*you asked that a murderer*," he contrived craftily, so that they might release Christ. For if they had caused the murderer to be released, would they not thereby have proved the greater guilty party, rather than the innocent one? But now, on the contrary, they chose the guilty man and handed over the innocent one to be slain. (see Matt. 27:20)

Saying, "*the Author of life*," he shows that Christ himself raised himself. But he does not ground the resurrection on the testimonies of prophets; rather, since he was credible to them, he grounds it on the band of the apostles. And when he has suspended the charge, he grieves intensely, then again relaxes, urging them to repentance, because the sin was out of ignorance and folly, and because what had been ordained from the beginning and spoken through the prophets was not to be passed over. And since he has gone this far, he already even explicitly introduces repentance as something to be taken up necessarily, for the removal of sins, and for the enjoyment and possession of the endless goods that are

shared by those who, through repentance and good works, have prospered.

<u>Acts 3:16a</u> ***And by the faith of his name, this one whom you behold and know, he established his name;***

That is, what am I saying, having believed in *his name* he was strengthened? And before he had believed, the name alone having been invoked strengthened him; so great is the grace that the name supplies. For he had not yet believed, but the mere call of the name had accomplished everything.

<u>Acts 3:16b</u> ***And his faith gave him this completeness in the presence of all of you.***

What then is the *faith* proclaimed through him? He explains it himself. "That they may know you the only true one," (Jn. 17:3) and then: Then, for fear that anyone say, "Therefore even an unbeliever will call upon his name, and even when treating an unbeliever the healing will nonetheless proceed, if the mere call of the name were what secured it"—so that no one may say this, he adds, "*And* the *faith* which is through *him*." That is, the name is indeed great and a source of healings, but souls capable of being deemed worthy of grace are also required. For if the name is invoked by unbelievers, and an unbeliever is going to remain one in need of healing, the proper power of the healing would not be at work. To say, "His name secured him," would be lofty and absolute and would harden the Jews. But "The *faith* which is through *him*" is humble. Peter blends the humble with the lofty, those things belonging by nature to the matter, and those belonging to the disposition and power of the hearers, because of the agreeable reception.

<u>Acts 3:17-20a</u> ***And now, brothers, I know that in ignorance you acted, as did your rulers. But the God who foretold by the mouth of all his prophets that his Christ would suffer, therefore fulfilled it. Repent therefore and turn back, so that your sins may be blotted out; that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.***

Peter said, "*I know that in ignorance you acted*," from which I see many of you turning back and being saved. For he knew that they did not act from ignorance, but he therefore opened to them the door of repentance.

Therefore he says: "*Repent*," not concerning those things done on the cross (for he had said concerning those, that they were in ignorance), but concerning other *sins*.

And by saying, "*times of refreshing*, he indicates that many hardships are about to happen to them, and that wars will be brought about. For this word would be fitting to one who weeps and longs for relief. "*that times of refreshing may come*," he says. That is, during the times of refreshment which, *from the presence of the Lord*, he says will be presided over by the divine and fatherly essence. For it is not fitting that those who insulted the Son through the passion should not find the recompense which those in the Roman camps under Vespasian and Titus, who raged against Christ on behalf of the Jews, also found. And not only are they deprived of their civic life, but after the desolation of their metropolis and the temple they wander about, living scattered everywhere, and until the end of this corruptible life they will not in any way obtain refreshment. For at that same time the coming of Christ from heaven will award to each according to the measure for the rewards of their labors. The knowledge that these things will then occur he now places before the Jews, so that by fear of these things they may be more readily drawn to repentance.

<u>Acts 3:20b-21</u> ***whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times.***

And he threatened the Jesus Christ who had been handed over to you; whom *heaven* must receive *until the times of the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times*. See how Peter proceeds on the way. In his first public proclamation he announced the resurrection and his ascension into heaven, and there also the visible presence, which he calls a time of refreshing, in which he points out the times of the resurrection. Which times Paul also longs for, saying: And we who are in this tent groan being burdened. (2 Cor. 5:4) If anyone also calls the times of refreshing those after the destruction, that does not prevent it. For Christ also shortened their period of affliction and captivity because of the elect, (Matt. 23:22) so that those who believed might find refreshment and be saved from that severe suffering and necessity. And having said above, But *God*, what he foretold, does not set aside Scriptural testimony concerning the crucifixion, because each of them is spoken of with many sins and punishment concerning them, and he did not wish to grieve for a time. He has used an easier account concerning Christ, a privilege of the humility of the hearers for the discourse. For the Lord's being seen, that is, his humanity, his sending from *heaven* was brought in, and for the future his reception into heaven. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*Whom*," Peter says, "*heaven must receive*," although indeed he had already been received at the time of the ascension. But in this passage the language is used more personally, according to his own letter, in which he says concerning Christ: " For he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was brought to him from heaven." (2 Peter 1:17) For even the phrase Λαβὼν[2]

instead of "ἔλαβεν" the construction of the sentence requires it, so that the meaning may be properly structured. Therefore likewise the phrase "῞Ον δεῖ ὑποδέξασθαι" has "Δεῖ" taken instead of "ἔδει." Since the ascension and visible presence of him to the heavens was not seen by all, they were for a time left to make use of their own conjecture. Yet by saying "he prepared the heaven to receive the one sent" he indicated in more vital terms, through the phrase "῞Ον δεῖ οὐρανὸν ὑποδέξασθαι," that the One to be received by heaven is the Son, coeternal with the Father and sent by the Father, from whom he was reckoned fellow to the Father as Son and Only-Begotten, and unquestionably ascending into heaven as one who had come down from heaven, and again necessarily received into the paternal dwelling, and from whom, according to the economy, he descended, there to be enthroned again, so that the assertion "Son and heavenly" may be established, and it may be shown that the same one is again expected to come from heaven. And to make these things plainly known, he refers to Moses and the prophets; to Moses, “The Lord our God will raise up for you a prophet like me,” (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22) and to David, likening the rain that descends from his heaven as if upon the earth. (see Ps. 71:6) And having generally referred them to those prophets, he again comforts them, as if they had become sons made receptive of the prophets’ teaching, whether not by nature but by grace through the generous bestower. For he has a Son by nature. The difference between sonship by nature and by appointment is great. For some were adopted as sons through the spiritual education of the prophets, while he by natural relation possesses sonship in the highest degree.

In another way: "*whom heaven must receive* " is put in place of "It is necessary that heaven receive it," since indeed it exists as God. How then did he not say, "Which heaven received"? He says this as speaking about the upper times. And by "*until the times of the restoration*" he indicates the cause, why now it no longer comes.

"It must be restored," he says, "and all must come to an end," and then it will come.

> **<u>Acts 3:22-23</u>** ***Moses said to our fathers: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like me; you shall listen to him in everything he tells you. And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from the people."***

What is this, "*like me*"? Christ is born in Bethlehem, and Moses in Egypt. That Moses is an Israelite, as is this Jesus according to the flesh. That Moses is of a priestly lineage, as is this Jesus of David because of the Virgin. Pharaoh opposed that Moses, Herod opposed this Jesus. That Pharoh killed infants, and this Herod slayed infants; that Moses and this Jesus are male. That Moses was saved through a mother, and this Jesus was saved through a Mother and also with His Mother. That Moses was in a coffin and beside a river; this Jesus was also in Lycon and by the same river in the Egyptian city. That Moses was raised by a foreigner, the daughter of Pharaoh; this Jesus was raised in a city and in a foreign city which had been subjected to Pharaoh. I do not say these things comparing the Master to the servant, but comparing time and manner, and outlining the truth in a shadow.

> **<u>Acts 3:24</u>** ***And all the prophets from Samuel onward, and those who spoke thereafter, announced and foretold these days.***

This also must be implied here: *To our fathers*, as the sense may be: All likewise, as many as have spoken *to our fathers*.

<u>Acts 3:25-26</u> ***You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." To you first God, having raised up his child Jesus, sent him, blessing you by turning each of you away from your wickedness.***

"*You are the descendants of the prophets*," instead of, Do not be discouraged nor think yourselves alienated from the promises. *You are the descendants of the prophets*, as I was telling you, and through you these things have come to pass. "*You*," he says, "*are the descendants of the prophets*," but this one is the Son of God, sharing the Father in essence, and giving himself to them as well. "*You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant*." *Descendants*, instead of heirs. For if a descendant, then also an heir; and heirs not recently enrolled, but as descendants; and that he may show how much from adoption, if indeed they themselves also will, they too are heirs as descendants; therefore he sent the Son as a Son, "*He sent*" indeed also to others, but to you first; and not only that, but first, as it were, before those who crucified and killed him. And when? Not only now, but also before the cross, and before so great an attempt, and after the resurrection. Therefore he says, "*Having raised* him for you first." What is the purpose? To bless and save you, if then you yourselves would choose to turn *away from your wickedness*.

Translator notes for Acts chapter 3.

1. This likely references Josephus's historical accounts regarding the Second Temple's construction, specifically highlighting a remnant or structure that survived the destruction of Solomon's Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Cyrus the Great permitted the rebuilding of the temple following his conquest of Babylon.

2. The Greek words λαβὼν and ἔλαβεν are both inflections of the verb λαμβάνω, which means "to take" or "receive". The primary difference

between them lies in their grammatical form, one is a participle and the other is a verb, changing how they function in a sentence. λαβὼν: This is the Aorist Active Participle, Nominative, Masculine, Singular. It translates as "having taken" or "taking". It describes an action performed by the subject, often preceding the main action of the sentence. ἔλαβεν: This is the Aorist Active Indicative, 3rd Person, Singular. It translates as "he/she/it took" or "he/she/it received". It is the main verb of the sentence, acting as the finite action.

CHAPTER 4

Acts 4:1-4a ***While they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed because they taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They laid hands on them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who heard the message believed.***

See how matters are managed. First they were all mocked together. Then, after they became respected in the public speeches and afterward wrought a great marvel, therefore indeed thereafter, having grown bold, God permitting, they enter into dangers, and undertake the contests. See the progress of the Jews to boldness, since seeking the one who will deliver up Christ, now they lay hands themselves, having become bolder after the cross. For they even had the commander, so that they might again cast a public charge upon those who had been, and not avenge as private persons, which they everywhere endeavor to do. Before the multitude they bound the apostles, that seeing them they might work with greater cowardice. But the opposite happened. For many of those *who heard the message believed*. Do you see a

visible divine operation? And indeed even those who had already believed became weaker. But Peter's speech, being formed by the divine Spirit, touched their very souls. Privately they examine them, so that the hearers might not profit from their boldness.

Acts 4:4b-7a ***And the number of men came to about five thousand. And it came to pass on the next day that they assembled their rulers and elders and scribes in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the priestly kindred. And having set them in the midst, they inquired.***

"*Five thousand*." For this reason he was speaking beforehand, about the five thousand: "You give them something to eat." (Matt. 14:16, Mark 6:37, Luke 9:13) That is, you will first satisfy the five thousand with faith and then you yourselves afterwards.

Acts 4:7b ***By what authority, or in what name, did you do this?***

And indeed they knew; for distressed, when declaring in Jesus the resurrection, it had seized them. But they question them, awaiting them, thinking that, the court and the crowd being afraid, they would deny, and that everything would thereby be brought about. See how maliciously they question. For they wished the apostles' deed to be confessed as theirs rather than the power of Christ. See also how they would not even name the healing of the lame man; for they do not say what, but, "*do this*." They, however, called them with honor, saying: "Rulers of the people." And when they came to the matter, they do not depart from the proper rebuke. For they say that above all we ought to be crowned as benefactors; since we are judged, let it be made known to all the people; for this troubles them the more.

<u>Acts 4:8-14</u> ***Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: Rulers of the people, and elders of Israel: if we are examined today concerning a support to a sick man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in this one this man stands before you healthy. This is the stone that was rejected by you the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Now when they observed the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and common men, they marveled and recognized them that they had been with Jesus; and seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition.***

"*Rulers of the people*," according to the position of the rough crowd.

"*elders of Israel*," according to the teaching and solid authority of the people raised toward greater sanctity. For he divided the assembly of hearers into two, so that those of them who are not equally capable of understanding what is said, some only casually hearing the words, others receiving the announced matter more effectively and more deeply into the soul, might be addressed suitably. Since therefore, as you have taken upon yourselves the care of the order to which you were preferred, you chose to examine us today, the men who have ministered in kindness to a person's weakness, and not to distribute to that work itself with wonder and reverence the honor due to it, by which name such a good has been conversed, for I say, since you have fallen into such

great error, what else remains to be done here than that we awaken you from this deep sleep, saying both to you and to the people that by this name we have accomplished it? The name in this place means the reputation that is held about him and the glory. As the Psalmist also says when he speaks: “How wonderful is your name in all the earth!” (Ps. 8:1) Such a reputation has been poured out among you, that not only it is not honored in glory, but even he who bears such a name you have subjected to the death of evildoers.

And he calls him a *Nazarene* from the place from which the reputation arose, dwelling here among the humblest about Christ, so that he might make clear that not even the human lowliness dishonors the true glory, if only the discerning observer sees in what way.

Therefore, to their shame concerning those to whom the word is directed, he immediately adds the, “*You crucified*,” together with the, He “*raised from the dead*.” Who raised him? *God*. For since, being envied by you, it seemed to render worthless to the death of evildoers the glory arising from the miracles of him (wherefore they also said, “What shall we do? For this man works many signs”), (Jn. 11:47-48) to the cross he set against you the resurrection. Who? God raised him. For the resurrection is ascribed to the Father, since every godly work is common, except for the hypostatic properties of the life-giving Trinity[1], and in order to show them as opposing from that source. For there was not yet an opportunity of time for him to proclaim plainly that he had risen by his own power, especially among men who were striving to establish things by their own means, and therefore were not subject to the righteousness of God. (see Rom. 10:3)

"*that in the name*," Peter says, "*this man stands before you* healed." By the word "*stands*" he indicated the sense "has been made upright."

And the phrase, "*This is the stone*," does not refer to the lame man, but to Jesus Christ, in whose name the lame man was healed. This stone, though *rejected* by you who were appointed for the building, has become for the house the chief *cornerstone* of faith, joining together both walls, the people from the Jews and those from the Gentiles, into agreement of one faith.

Observe also that the psalmist saying, "*there is salvation in no one else*," is purely clear: "This came from the Lord" is as it were the logic and the salvific bond, by which every person is not saved by any other than by the one *cornerstone*.

For "*There is no other name,*" that is, no venerable glory, unless this one faith centered on Christ the cornerstone alone favors and accepts the other faiths, as if the saving grace were given only in it.

Concerning unbelieving high priests, who command that it is not proper to speak boldly in the name of Christ, and the renewal of the apostles: on the Church's giving of thanks for the steadfastness of the apostles in the faith, On the unanimity and universal communion of believers. In which is also contained the story of Ananias and Sapphira and their bitter death.

<u>Acts 4:15-23</u> ***Having commanded them to go outside the council, they presented with one another, saying, "What shall we do to these men? For indeed a notable sign has been performed by them, revealing to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it; but in case it spread any further among the people, let us threaten them that they no longer speak at all to any man in this name." And having called them, they charged them not to speak nor teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answering them said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge. For we***

can only speak the things which we have seen and heard." And when they had threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all glorified God for that which had happened. For the man on whom this miracle of healing was done was more than forty years old.

While the apostles had not yet recovered from their previous afflictions, they fell into other ones by a certain providential way. For at first they were all mocked as drunk, suspected of the operation of languages unknown to them. Secondly, they enter into dangers. And not successively these things, but first, having been approved in public speeches, and as it were having been trained for boldness through the miracle of the lame man, especially God having granted it, they from that time take up the challenges. Consider for me from that time the ill-deeds of the Jews. For concerning Christ they sought the one who would betray him, whereas here they themselves lay hands on them, becoming more brazen and daring from now after the cross. From which also they used the chief of the temple for daring, converting what had happened into a public accusation and not a private one, as is their custom. They did not, however, immediately make use of the assembly against the apostles, alleging that it occurred in the evening. And to the Jews it was possible to make use of the truce for wrongdoing, by putting them into terror through imprisonment, and therefore to soften them by intriguing beforehand. But the delay toward the apostles was contrived in order that they might become bolder. Indeed the ploy was to bind them before the multitude, but examine them secretly: for they feared those who were bound in the sight of the crowd, and examined them supposedly before a court as lawbreakers; privately, however, that the audience might choose the better course not by their bluntness, and by the wonder of those being examined. But they nevertheless question them with authority, though knowing (for how could they

have been ignorant, who had arrested them because they proclaimed Christ's resurrection?), thinking that they would deny it out of fear of the tribunal: and as if, by questioning them, the whole matter would be resolved. “You did it,” they say, namely, “By what authority did you do it?” as if it had been carried out by their own authority, not by the authority of Christ. But they did not say “the lame man” by name: for they were so distressed by this that they did not even want to mention the healing. Therefore Peter answered: “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.” (Acts 4:10) We preach, he says, humility, boasting on account of the excellent resurrection. But when he had urged them with these words, he also adds what is from Scripture, saying "the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner," (Ps. 118:22) and whatever formerly on this matter was treated by us. Consider also that where it is fitting to teach, they even bring forward prophecies, as in the earlier sermon: but when they speak freely alone, they express an opinion: "For there is no other name given," he says. (Acts 4:12) And what this is has already been said. Yet they do not lead the apostles before Pilate as they did Christ, but they themselves judge: first indeed affected by shame and modesty, then fearing for fear that they too be accused by these concerning him.

Acts 4:23-25a ***And they reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. Those who heard, with one accord lifted up their voices to God and said, (not recounting out of ambition, but showing the proofs of Christ's grace): "Sovereign Lord, you who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of your servant David said.***

See how complete is this prayer and how fitting to the occasions of the times. For when they said, “You, Lord, knower of all hearts,” (Acts 1:24) there was indeed a need of foreknowledge. But here, since it was necessary to stop the mouths of adversaries, they cry out, “Lord.” And, as if demanding the fidelity of a covenant from him, they put forward prophecy; at the same time consoling themselves that their enemies were striving against them without cause and in vain. Consider also their modesty: for they do not desire to tear apart or to destroy, but, they say, “look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness,” (Acts 4:29) by stretching out your hand, that is, prizing us with your invincible power. For here “hand” signifies that. For it wishes to signify invincible power, just as when he says, “Your hand destroyed the nations.” (Ps. 44:2) In the earlier words, however, “Your hand and your counsel had long before decreed.” (Ps. 38:3) “Hand” signifies that all things be ordered by God decently and with reason, since the combination and rational nature alone, which is none other than man, is for the most part accustomed to accomplish by the hand those things which are most useful. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 4:25b-27a ***Why did the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rose up and the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For truly they assembled against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate.***

Which *nations rose up against Christ*? The nations of the Jews, namely. For although they were all Jews, nevertheless they came from various nations among which they were scattered. "Do whatever your hand and your will have ordained" (Acts 4:28): that is, they could not do it themselves, but you are the one who

permitted and brought the whole matter to completion, namely prudent and wise. Indeed they had come together as enemies with savage intent, but they were doing what you wished.

Acts 4:27b ***With nations and the peoples of Israel.***

In Jerusalem the Hebrews with Caiaphas and Anna, the people with Pilate.

Acts 4:28 ***Do whatever your hand and your will have ordained to come to pass.***

The same intention remains evident. For there is no need for counsel where power is present. Therefore whatever things you ordained from the beginning were done by the Apostles, and so the prayer was not to repel troubles, but for the success of evangelical prayer; for they did not say, Free them, but, "grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness." (Acts 4:29)

Acts 4:29-31 ***And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and to make signs and wonders to be done through the name of your holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.***

The sign that the prayer had been heard was an earthquake: sometimes, however, it happens that the sign is of anger. To be *filled with the Holy Spirit* signifies to be wholly devoted to the given operation of the divine Spirit and little turned away by

fleshly things: or that they were inflamed, and the gift was burning in them, on account of which they spoke with freedom, disregard bodily dangers, from which gift also was the heart and soul, as it were the source of spiritual actions. For "heart" now signifies that, as it were, the first subsistence of the animal, which also sustains vital functions.

It was, then, that which contributes to the pleasing of God. For the control of the intellect is to disregard dangers. But the characteristic of the vital principle is that the management of bodily affairs be determined, that the few things necessary for living, and how much is needed to live, be supplied to the possessor, while all that is lacking for life bears fruit. Also concerning the place *shaken*, one must understand this: the earthquake occurred to terrify the unbelieving and those who were conspiring, and to lead the apostles into *boldness*. For the purpose and necessity of such signs was that they themselves be strengthened.

Acts 4:32 ***The whole group of those who believed had one heart and one soul. And not one of the possessions of any of them was called his own, but they had everything in common.***

Brotherly love, and as a pledge given them by the teacher Christ, by which he said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.” (Jn. 13:35) Therefore each, regarding the neighbor as himself, possessed nothing among his belongings kept back for himself, but added them to common use. Where he also says that great grace had come to them from mutual love: for because they claimed nothing for themselves, none among them was in need, which was an imitation of that saying of David: “You open your hand and satisfy every living thing.” (Ps. 145:16)

Acts 4:33-34 ***And with great power the apostles gave their testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For none among them was in need. For those who were owners of fields or houses, selling them brought the earnings of the things being sold.***

They replied, saying, as if something had been entrusted to them, and this they speak as if concerning a debt. For by divine signs they were showing divine power of Him who had risen from the dead.

Acts 4:35 ***And they placed them at the feet of the apostles. And it was distributed to each as anyone had need.***

Placing honors *at the feet of the apostles*, but not on their hands, shows the great honor and reverence of those who brought them. The fact that they did not dare to give them to the hands indicates that they made them stewards and dispensers, as if consuming from common funds, and not as personal gifts through their hands. Moreover, what was placed at the feet constituted honor toward them and removed the reproach of the poverty of those supported. And they gave as if from common funds being administered.

Acts 4:36-37 ***But Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which means son of consolation), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, and who owned a field, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.***

First, he recalls the one who had succeeded, namely *Joseph*, as a greater rebuke to Ananias, because with so many persons doing these things, and so many signs, and so great a grace, none of them was instructed by him. But the calling of *Joseph* was confirmed

by the Apostles as testimony of compassionate virtue. And he was *a Levite* who conducted affairs in *Cyprus*, since the law was already relaxed, and people were migrating from Judea wherever one wished. And *Barnabas*, being of Judean tongue and being brought into Greece, he presents himself as *a son of consolation*, a sort of encouragement and mercy. This is the preparation for the destructive narrative concerning Ananias and Sapphira. For he too imitated Joseph in giving up his idleness, not using properly the office and the end, and so he escaped notice while bringing destruction upon himself.

CHAPTER 5

Acts 5:1-2 ***But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a parcel of land, and secretly withheld a part of the earnings, with the knowledge of his wife, and bringing a portion, laid it at the apostles' feet.***

Entirely full of Satanic madness, he who seizes what is good impulsively and by necessity and violence, while at the same time lukewarm in his zeal for the value of the good things, having squandered all his possessions. Three signs occurring at the same time: knowledge of secrets; dread of inquiry of the mind; and, in addition to these, removal through commands.

Acts 5:3-6 ***Then Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to withhold part of the earnings of the land? While it remained, did it not remain yours? And after it was sold, was it not in your power? Why have you created this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And when Ananias***

heard these words, he fell down and died [ξέψυξε [1]]***. Great fear seized all who heard these things. The young men arose, wrapped him up, and carrying him out buried him.***

"*Ananias, why has*?" etc. For we do not, he says, drag you unwillingly; that which has been randomly taken from you as an offering to God, again they spend for their own need, an indisputable sacrilege. Therefore they were subjected to a penalty for having committed sacrilege. By what? by death; for that extinguished it, as if it dried it up, that is, it deprived it of the vital moisture. Wherefore also the living thing is said by the ancients to be moist in its essence.

Acts 5:7-9 ***It happened about three hours later, and his wife, not knowing what had occurred, entered. Peter answered her, "Tell me, have you given that much of the estate?" She said, "Yes, that much." Peter said to her, "Why is it that you agreed to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."***

Because Peter did not call her, but waited for her to enter when she herself wished, she having been given the power both to recover her senses and not to enter shamelessly. She entered, however, ignorant of what had happened to the man, for no one dared to reveal it to her out of fear and reverence for the Master. Yet the interval of three hours would have been sufficient for news to spread among many, but they restrained themselves through fear. For Luke the evangelist, marveling at this also, states both: the span of hours and the woman's ignorance. When they questioned how much of the field they had sold, that opportunity of grace offered itself to him, as if the power to sell and to cheat were not in her but in the man; and since they found the woman to be like the man in deceit, they condemned her to a like penalty.

For he knew that contempt of divine things also kindles into anger one who is free from anger. This tradition under Moses, most gentle, also makes them faithful by words, so that those who gathered wood on the Sabbath were overwhelmed with stones. (see Num. 15:52) And indeed a transgression appeared in those things which were proper, but here sacrilege: for those things which had been set aside for the support of the needy belonging to God, they were using for the needs of their additions. For it was necessary that from those things which were kept in the common store they should fill the lack of the needy. Consider also this, how strongly the household servants are affected. For they do not want those who have once obtained spiritual grace to be either thieves or sacrilegious in their conduct. And they were not wanting to put strangers to punishment, for fear that they seemed to compel even unwilling people by fear of punishment to come to the faith. But if Satan filled the heart of Ananias and accomplished the whole matter, what is this great severity against Ananias? Yet it was done not rashly but justly, since he had shown himself so capable of Satan.

Acts 5:10-11 ***She fell immediately at his feet and breathed her last. And when the young men went in, they found her dead, and carrying her out they buried her beside her husband. And there was a great fear upon the whole church, and upon all those who heard these things.***

How at his *feet*? For she stood near him. And he set her near, so that if she wished to repent and confess, she might not be ashamed before the others as one overheard. The fear of the wisest Peter toward those who have stumbled is not of hardheartedness, but of predictive teaching concerning the many sins of people that lie ahead. For when the seeds of the Gospel begin to be sown, and immediately the weeds which we have seen spring up, they would

at once have uprooted them. Therefore Moses also ordered that the transgressor mentioned in the introductions of the law, and one who is to be destroyed for a slight sin, be declared by God to be cut off. The same thing likewise upon the first-created ones, therefore condemned by tasting of the tree. (see Gen. 3) For when a plague scourges, the more cunning becomes more senseless, according to the sacred proverb. (see Prov. 19:25) Therefore upon these things the punishment advanced as a gain for those present and seeing the things that happened. And indeed there were other signs that appeared, but there was not so great a fear. Therefore the Lord is known for executing judgment. (Ps. 9:5) For in the deeds of his hands, in the drama concerning the sinner, a beneficial fear is born in others. Even as in the case of Uzzah's punishment. (2 Sam. 6, 1 Chron. 13) For his chastisement became a fear to many, so that things placed before God were kept untouched by the disrespectful. It must be noted also from here, namely from the carrying out of the dead Ananias and his wife, through the same funeral rites, the law being disregarded. For even those who touched the corpse of Ananias did not remain unclean until evening, but the same persons also served the dead wife.

Acts 5:12-16 ***And by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people; and they were all together in Solomon's porch; and no one from the rest dared to join them, but the people magnified them. And more were added to the Lord those who were being saved, multitudes of both men and women; so that they carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and beds, so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on any one of them as he came by. And also the multitude from the surrounding towns would come to Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were troubled by unclean spirits; and all of them were healed.***

Look how the life of the apostles was playing out. First there was sadness because of the Ascension, then joy because of the descent of the Holy Spirit: again sadness because of mocking, then joy because of the faithful and because a sign was done: besides this sadness because they were held in prison, then joy because of the reply. Again here, cheerfulness from the signs and the brightness, and sadness from the high priest and those who seized them. And concerning the ancients, one would find that all who lived according to God experienced the same. Do not marvel, he says, how, having departed from their own houses, they spent time in the temple along *Solomon's porch*, and how they were all in agreement. For the wonders worked through them were already awesome to the whole multitude. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

For he wishes to show this also in saying, "*By the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people*," and immediately adds, "*and no one from the rest dared to join them*"; that is, no one dared to approach them. "*but the people magnified them*." Who? a Jew. Whom? the apostles. And what is the greatness? that with the faith of Christ being added, they even carried their sick through the streets and squares of the city on couches and pallets, so that they might happen to be strengthened by the overspreading of Peter's shadow. Which did not occur with Christ, but this too is the work of the One who promised and said: "He who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater than these he will do." (Jn. 14:12) Therefore these things likewise from the promised Christ befell the apostles: through those who believed, through those who were healed, through those who were punished, as in the case of Ananias. For even the apostles themselves, being modest, ascribed the miracles to the Teacher, completing them in his name; and moreover their life and their apostolic virtue being such, were sufficient to reward with greatness those who therefore chose to live.

While the apostles were still in prison, an angel of God opened the doors by night, permitting them to proclaim Jesus without hindrance. When the chief priests later arrested them again to prevent them from teaching further, they flogged them and released them. Gamaliel's trustworthy counsel regarding the apostles, with certain examples and proofs.

<u>Acts 5:17-26a</u> ***But the high priest and all who were with him, being of the sect of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy; and they laid hands on the apostles and put them in custody. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors; and bringing them out he said, Go, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard this, they entered at daybreak into the temple and taught. Then the high priest and those with him came and summoned the council and all the senate of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported, saying, We found the prison securely shut with all safety and the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened we found no one inside. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were at a loss about them as to what this would come to. But one came and reported to them, saying, Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people. Then the captain went with the officers and brought them, not with force;***

When these things were completed by the apostles, and the multitude was increased by the preaching, and the number of the faithful was already growing great by the daily distribution; the *high priest*, he says, having risen, that is, being aroused and stirred by what was taking place, attacked them more violently, the *Sadducees* in particular viewing him as more inhuman for his rage against the resurrection they detested, while the apostles were

accomplishing everything. For proclaiming Christ risen, and performing miracles in the name of the Risen One to bring people to faith, they showed that if the matter were false it would not have turned out so. Therefore, being therefore stung and preparing for the murder of the apostles, they for a time held them in the security of custody, not immediately bringing them to trial, while they themselves, through fear of detection, craftily sought repentance. Those men indeed acted so. But God, by the postponement wrought also by device, shamed those who had been wicked in vain, and rather confirmed the apostles by the removal from prison through a divine angel, and instructed them where and how they ought to continue unwaveringly. With the violent men meanwhile involved through ignorance in the perception of the angel, at the time when they postponed presenting the apostles for judgment, he did not show pity (for how could those stirred up to greater wrath have been more inclined to mercy?), but in order that first he might compel the arrogant to accomplish their own will by their custody, and, having therefore barricaded them, then, having been struck by the divine oversight of the matters contemplated, he might chastise the perplexity of the resolved by proving the power to be divine.

For the deliverance by the angel of the prison proved to the apostles a comfort, and to the Jews a benefit. It deceived the Jews, so that first, as I said, they would be thrown into perplexity, and if they wished they themselves would also come to understand and be instructed that the power is divine. Yet they were so blinded that they did not even dare to use force to drag the apostles away from the temple, whom nevertheless they detested most of all. From which it is also clear that the herdlike crowd is wiser than the Jewish leaders, those ignorant ones of the law, these judges being drawn to salvation by divine signs sooner than they. Therefore the legal experts ask with much knowledge of the divine signs and assurance: “Did we not order you by command not to

speak?" And yet if by command alone, what then is the custody and the great security? For attendants and guards were placed over the imprisonment, of whom there is no remembrance now as to the concealment of the angelic wonder. It remains to say: If to your command there had been added our consent in handing over to custody, the present examinations and inquiries upon the violation would be reasonable. But if not even these, the present calls for punishment as for transgression are those of fools.

Acts 5:26b-27 ***For they feared the people, for fear that they should be stoned. And having brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them.***

Oh, the folly of those men! who indeed had recognized the carefulness of the mob by a hidden fear, and likewise of God, who plainly always snatches away his own with his hands as if they were birds: yet nevertheless they never wished to be adopted.

Acts 5:28a ***Did we not command you not to teach in that name? And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.***

A very forward and dishonest and foolish man questioned them, "*not to teach*, etc." The command, indeed, has already been said to be full of rashness, and it is redundant to repeat the same things to them about the same matters.

Acts 5:28b-29a ***"And do you intend to bring upon us the blood of this man?" Peter and the apostles answered, saying.***

He still seemed a mere man to them. And to show that the command had been necessary, and that he spared not his own salvation, and to harden the multitude against them, they said these things.

<u>Acts 5:29b-31a</u> ***We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging on a tree. This man God exalted to his right hand as Prince and Savior.***

See how great was the modesty of those who were questioned: for they did not answer with fierceness; since they were instructors, they were not outraged, but had pity on them, and they attempted to free them from error. For they did not quarrel against them, nor did they reply crudely to them because of the gift of signs given by God through them, teaching them rather to kick against the whip; but first indeed they say that obedience ought to be rendered more readily to *God rather than to men*, secretly accusing them as despising those things which had been done on their account. Then also that he whom they themselves call a mere man was both *Savior* and God, and God had such concern for him that he raised him from the dead. For to say that he had risen by his own power was not yet safe, in case it be thought that he was contrary to God. But in order to rouse them from profound sleep, he insists them to understand to what condemnation they were subject for having killed by exaltation from God this man by a death on a cross.

<u>Acts 5:31b</u> ***To grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.***

Having therefore raised the discourse concerning the cross, and as if a pardon beyond forgiveness for those likewise deposed in a frenzy against Christ, as if engineering to unburden them of so

great a weight, he says: But this one, having been dishonored by you and exalted by God, gave the spirit of repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, not at all the skeptical criticism against him because of the cross, capable of leading to apostasy, since the one exalted by God is forgetful of injury toward those who, through persuasion, have acknowledged him. See how the Jews, being instructed both by deeds and by words, did not obey, and therefore their condemnation is just. By deeds indeed, consenting that the apostles be led into prisons, and marvelously released. By words also, so that the Jews through the apostles' speech might all be admonished. But the apostles themselves were also anointed to speak boldly. Some others were calmed and became sharers in the apostles' persuasive words. But the high priest and the rulers were enraged against the apostles, plotting against them, even seeking to slay them, since from this time their fury against Christ went forth more plainly, not from justice but from envy and leading them on to similar murder. Therefore they say, "And do you intend to bring upon us the blood of this man?" (Acts 5:28) calling it blood, that is, murder, just as God said to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood," (Gen. 4:10) instead of "the murder." The Jews therefore spoke, seemingly sparing their own salvation, while hardening the multitude against the apostles.

Acts 5:32 ***And we ourselves are witnesses of these words.***

That there was mercy, because he promised repentance. For the resurrection was therefore already confessed.

Acts 5:33 ***Moreover, the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to those who were obedient to him. But when they heard these things, they debated and consulted together how they might kill them.***

That he grants forgiveness, and we bear witness, and the Holy Spirit, which would not have come, if first the sins had not been loosened. Humility, moreover, is the nature of such a discourse. For it has not been said to us as a privilege entirely for those who love him, but to the One who imparts it, it has been given in common to all who submit to Him. Therefore, even if they themselves were persuaded, they would not be without a share of his gift, through the lawlessness caused by the cross.

Acts 5:34-36 ***Then a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law respected by all the people, stood up in the council, ordered the apostles to be put outside for a little while, and spoke to them: "Men of Israel, be careful about these men; consider what you propose to do. For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.***

This *Gamaliel* was the teacher of Paul. (see Acts 22:3) That a teacher who was respected for his legal judgments should not believe this, even if not entirely understanding it, is extreme folly. And from his words themselves, which differed also in understanding, he shows sufficient evidence. And it is also evident from those very actions. For ordering the apostles to be expelled from the council, in order to intimidate them, he even made the innocent appear to himself, not as one pardoned by shared opinion, but as making excuses for their words.

Therefore he does not use great violence, but as if they were drunk with passion he says: "*be careful about these men; consider what you propose to do*," as if, "Do not act as chance carries you." Then, bringing examples of those who have acted thoughtlessly in such matters and to their own ruin, he adduces *Theudas* and Judas the

Galilean, who did not reach a favorable end for themselves. The examples are not old but recent, and many eyewitnesses to them exist. So that experience may guard against coming to a similar end, he cites these examples; then, having therefore smoothed the discourse with them, he tries to turn aside the hearers from plotting against the apostles, for fear that, if they set out upon an unhindered occasion, we should, he says, by dying in opposition to God, fall into godlessness, and therefore, not being armed against those men but being armed for ourselves by the very nature of one who attacks what seems to be God, come to ruin for ourselves. For if there is a movement of mere human passion, fury against them is excessive. For destruction is attendant upon beginnings, as the examples suggest. Nor did he say plainly that the apostles were moved by God or by human impulse, but vaguely. For if he had said that they were from God, they would immediately have argued against him. But if he had said they were from men, he would again have made them easy targets for attack against the apostles. Therefore, having wisely ordered his discourse, he bids them await the outcome and not hurry into conduct about matters not yet known. For to fight against one who seems to be God does not destroy that thing but oneself. For if it is human, he says, what need have you of matters? But if it is divine, you will not be able by matters even to destroy it, so that it may not be thought rashly to proceed where the facts are unknown. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 5:37-38a</u> ***After this Judas the Galilean arose in the days of the census, and drew away a considerable people after him. And he perished. And all who were persuaded by him were scattered. And these things I now say to you.***

It appears that the Galileans had risen up in the time of Pilate, following the teachings of *Judas* of Galilee. Judas's teaching, as

Josephus shows in the final books of his Jewish Antiquities[2], was a teaching that sent forth much imagination under the guise of religious prosperity. For he held that one ought not even to call anyone "lord" with the mouth, nor to pay him honor or reverence. Nor, accordingly, to acknowledge the reigning sovereign. And many of them, because they would not say "Caesar" is lord, endured the harshest outrages. They also taught that one should not offer to God any sacrifices other than those prescribed in the law of Moses. Wherefore they prevented the rites entrusted by the assembly of the people from being performed concerning the salvation of the king and the Roman nation. It is therefore likely that, roused against the Galileans for these reasons, Pilate ordered those whom they thought to be offering the prescribed sacrifices to be slain. Therefore the blood of the ones brought-forward was mingled with the sacrifices, as is also related in the Gospel according to Luke. (see Luke 3:1) *[JOSEPHUS]*

> **Acts 5:38b-42** ***Stand indifferent from these men and let them go. For if this plan or undertaking is of human origin, it will be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow it, for fear that you even be found fighting against God. They were persuaded by him. And having called the apostles, they beat them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus. And they released them. The apostles, therefore, went away rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the name. And every day in the temple and from house to house they ceased not to teach and to proclaim Jesus as the Christ.***

Gamaliel did not say that it is from God, but neither that the work is human. For with regard to what is from God, those men would immediately have opposed it, whereas what is from humans made

them bolder against the apostles. Therefore observe the carefulness of the man Gamaliel, wisely managing his speech. He commands to wait for the outcome. Nor did he say, "And if you do not destroy it, know that it is from God," but "*if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow it*." Let the former be attributed to the recklessness of those men, the latter to the power of God. They were persuaded that these things were spoken not in the presence of the apostles but apart. Moreover, since he was regarded as sharing their views and fearing the outcome as if it might actually occur, he imposed the matter upon them as well. Furthermore, the sweetness of his words combined with righteousness to help him persuade.

But if they were persuaded, how were they beaten? They were persuaded to refrain from the slaughter. For this was raging wildly among the lazy. *And they beat them* so that they would not rashly be driven to boast and act beyond bounds. And in truth, one thing was that their violence was to be abolished, another that the virtue of the adviser was to be chastised, and another that the scourge was to curb the madness of those who had been advised. See also the apostles' devotion to the better cause. For by the afflictions by which they hoped to be subdued, they were the more exercised, so that they might proceed to a more effective and more fearless doctrine, and not in secret, but immediately even in the temple from which they had been seized, and everywhere else also, they would proclaim Christ, showing to the listeners the futility of those who had used force against them.

Translator notes for Acts chapter 5.

1. The Greek word ξέψυξε primarily refers to the act of dying, but it can be used in both literal and figurative contexts.

2. In his Jewish Antiquities, particularly in Books XVIII and XX, the historian Flavius Josephus presents Judas of Galilee (also called Judas

of Gamala) as the founder of the "fourth philosophy" of Judaism, a radical movement that advocated for armed resistance against Roman taxation and rule.

CHAPTER 6

On the ordination of the seven deacons.

> **Acts 6:1-2** ***Now in these days, as the number of the disciples was increasing, a complaint arose of the Greek speakers against the Hebrews, because their widows were being neglected in the daily ministry. Therefore the twelve, having called together the whole body of the disciples, said, "It is not right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."***

Not on the same days, but on certain following ones. Yet, intending to begin the narration in the manner of Scripture, he proceeds in this way even now. He calls those speaking Greek not the religion, but those as *Greek speakers*. And by the murmuring he proclaims a kind of temptation, not from outside, but from within. For this shows the tested nature of the apostles, borne through being opposed on all sides. For when the twelve called together the multitude, and those about to enjoy the benefit of the appointed service, they allow them the choice, deeming themselves unworthy and occupied with *serving tables*, having neglected *the word according to God*. Therefore they laid hands on those chosen as deacons, not according to the present rank in the churches, but in order to distribute with precision to orphans and *widows* the provisions for their maintenance and not carelessly, and especially to widows and orphans because of whom the complaint is greatest. He calls charity a ministry, since it both cared for those who performed it and honored those who were benefited. It was not wickedness that made them overlook the widows, but the laziness of the many. Therefore, having been

deemed worthy of concern, the thing that gave sorrow was stopped. So too the public service. For he wishes to make clear the meaning of the word *ministry* [διακονίας]. For the Greeks call the public treasury a Λήϊτον, insofar as anyone hastens to it to contribute, whether from ambition or from means, toward a common provision. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

> **Acts 6:3-7** ***So appoint, therefore, brothers, seven men from among you who are testified to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall set over this business. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit; and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles. And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God multiplied, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly. And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.***

They remained filled with *the Holy Spirit and wisdom*, the appeal of the apostles required those who were to be chosen. For it is not for anyone to bear the curse of orphans and widows, nor of those who consume and devour them. For although he may not have been a thief, yet through sloth and his own negligence losing everything, or rashly perverting whatever he meets, they would bring no benefit to the office, nothing from the toleration of nothings, which is the greatest sign of wisdom. He says moreover that the word of God was growing through such a kind of descent (showing how great is the power of almsgiving), so that not even the assembly of the priests deviated from the purpose without being taken up together.

The Jews' uprising and slander against Stephen, and his sermon concerning God's covenant with Abraham, and concerning the twelve patriarchs: in which is also contained the famine, temptation and recognition of Jacob's sons, and concerning the birth of Moses, and the divine appearance made to him on Mount Sinai, concerning the exodus of the children of Israel and the formation of rites up to the time of Solomon, and the building of the temple. A confession of the supercelestial glory of Jesus Christ revealed to Stephen, in which, being stoned, Stephen devotedly fell asleep.

Acts 6:8 ***Stephen, full of faith and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.***

With the common ordination of the seven having taken place, Stephen obtained the greater grace of choice for the one more suitable for selection. For he who before ordination did not perform marvels, when it was not evident what he was, and when by ordination he became known, then the charism bestowed at the ordination was also displayed, so that it might be made clear either that grace alone is not sufficient, but that a supplementation of grace by ordination is required, according to the difference in those who receive it from readiness.

Acts 6:9-12a ***But some of those from the synagogue called the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of Cilicia, and of Asia arose, disputing with Stephen; and they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Then they persuaded men, saying, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes.***

He says that their frenzy and momentum rose again and that they were not only roused against themselves but also would soon

debate and sophisticate with another crowd, perhaps *Libertines, and Alexandrians, and Cyrenaicans, and Cilicians, and Asians*. And just as the discussion proceeds through another crowd, so likewise the accusation through others, and the plot of tricksters and desperate men. For, being prevented by Gamaliel from attempting anything against the apostles, and having nothing to charge against them, they now attack *Stephen* with slander, having missed the debate held in the clubs of talkers, and he says they perhaps call the Romans *Libertines*, having styled themselves after Livia the wife of Augustus, since the woman was also visible and especially loved for her virtue by Augustus. Indeed she herself lived on in return, persistently attending upon the tomb of Augustus.

In another way: the Libertines and *Cyrenians* from beyond Alexandria, since they were thought to surpass the Jews in sophistry. Therefore various synagogues were stationed in Jerusalem according to nations. And they had places set apart for the reading of the laws of Moses. For many of those who came up to Jerusalem to worship, especially at the Passover, which it was not lawful to celebrate outside Jerusalem, lodged there. So that, in order not to be compelled to emigrate from their homelands, they frequented Jerusalem and ministered there. The freedmen of the Romans were called Libertines. And when Stephen therefore despised them, as men hardened in heart and unwilling to converse, they, emboldened by their own vanity, were foremost in disputing with him. But to him alone, not to another, one thing: to bring shame upon the signs performed by him from envy, as if they might somehow place him in difficulty; and to those acting as representatives, out of ignorance; the other, that by diverting their discussion toward him they might keep him from attending to the signs. Therefore, when these things were present, and in addition they craftily introduced something against the law, so also all their zeal, he himself, having anticipated their craftiness, did this first,

having launched a more combative attack upon them, and by the power of the divine Spirit and wisdom in him he shut them up in confusion; then, when they wanted to reply in a more puzzling fashion, so that they might not even then be intelligible. For this reason their proceedings already became more like robbery. And he himself most plainly attacked them through their desires. What was this? The abolition of the law. He did not say these things, but he routed them. For if he had spoken openly, they would not have needed false witnesses. Which outcome was the desired end for him, but for them he stored up destruction.

Acts 6:12b ***And when they had arrested him, they led him away to the council.***

Stealthy attackers everywhere press on: seizing Christ through murderous men, bearing swords, and with the help of torches and the blaze of lamps of the night. They drag Peter and the remaining apostles from the temple, and now also Stephen to be judged, from the place of teaching to the council.

Acts 6:13-14 ***False witnesses stood up and said: "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered to us."***

They brought men who said that "*we have heard him* uttering blasphemous words against *Moses* and God." What were the words? "*That this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place*." And indeed Stephen said this, though not perhaps in so bare a form. How then are these men persuaded and false witnesses? Because they did not hear it as they now reported, but lied. For since they

had heard otherwise and now advanced a different account, it is reasonable that they be recorded as false witnesses. Just as it would be false testimony concerning Christ to say that he declared (Matt. 26:12), “I will destroy” the temple (for he did not say “I will destroy,” but “you destroy” [Λύσατε[1]], (Jn. 2:19) assigning the act of destroying to those men, not to himself, therefore false), so now they are false in claiming that to the Nazarene Stephen ascribed the destruction of the law and of the place. And to make that claim about a man from Nazareth clearly shows it was by his own hand and not by God and through Roman armies. But the customs of Moses were clearly changed for the better by the same God, through his own disciples and apostles. But the Nazarene was spoken of reproachfully. Now Stephen nowhere called Christ a Nazarene, except the rulers of the Hebrews. He himself always revered Christ and declared him just as proclaimed by the prophets, and always present with God. This is clear also from the words spoken before him. With these the wretched life of this man ended, being released. "He *will destroy this place*." For they had great reverence for the temple, when they wished also to emigrate. And there would be a twofold accusation if he changes their *customs*, and sets up other practices in opposition. Moses, moreover, was put forward everywhere, since the things of God would not be to them as those of Moses. Therefore he lived entirely for the glory of the crowd alone.

Translator notes for Acts chapter 6.

1. “Destroy” [Λύσατε] Grammatically, it is the 2nd person plural, aorist active imperative of the verb λύω. In Greek, λύσατε is a command meaning "loose," "untie," or "destroy," depending on the context.

CHAPTER 7

Acts 6:15-7:1-2a ***And all who were sitting in the council gazed at him, and they saw his face as the face of an angel. Then the high priest said, "Is it so?" And he said.***

"*they saw his face*." It even happens that someone who is in a lower rank appears graceful and splendid. Therefore, so that those to whom he was about to speak might be struck dumb by his words, he begins with a facial display, by which his words are more easily received.

Acts 7:2b ***Men, brothers and fathers, listen.***

See that Stephen does not teach willingly, but is compelled by those who ask. And since he prevailed by his discourse and his signs, he became unbearable to them. The false testimony of the hired men was instigated so that the matter might not appear to be an sham. For they did not fear God, but aimed at the praise of men. The preface, indeed, is truly wise and full of benevolence. For he wishes to present a familiarity with names, as one who is barefaced and harmful toward brothers and fathers is not sane. But he also sees and secures honor and profit, this being the nature of a man who proves himself, and beneficially for those concerning whom the speech is uttered. Yet as to you, he says, there is no perception of such a thing. For the calling which to me is imposed by the *brothers and fathers*, on the contrary, I view you as if you had forgotten our common nature, showing yourselves to be moved by indiscriminate hatred toward us, making even those things that incline toward the divine to appear favorably to you. Leaving other matters aside, I will lift up for you the remembrance of these things, which are not without the divine end of inclination, signs and wonders worked through us, of which you yourselves are witnesses, being accomplished in no other way. But having

indicated these things through the calling hinted by the brothers and fathers and having apprehended Stephen, let us now consider also those things connected with these, not by chance, but set forth with much of inspired wisdom.

> **<u>Acts 7:2c-5</u>** ***The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was living in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him: "Depart from your land and from your kindred, and come into a land that I will show you." Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God moved him into this land in which you now live. And he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a footstep.***

See here again how from the preface Stephen strips off the glory of those very ones, not assigning the glory to the temple, not to the nation, but to God alone. For "*the God of glory*," instead of "the glorified one," is said, God. This glorified one, working resourcefully out of the helpless, and making the dishonored honorable, will also make us so. For he who arranged wisdom for the helpless people from of old, that same one now has resolved to advance the formerly helpless glorious things toward the resourceful. And to make this credible, Abraham is presented according to the narrative, he who did not deserve the display of God in Mesopotamia by a temple or by sacrifices. And this accounts, as has already been said, for showing that the glorified God is able to do for those things and for us what he did for them, and to bring from obscurity into appearance. And although many hostile nations and kings were brought against Abraham and his seed, some were destroyed, yet what was humbler advanced to greater status. If then *the God of glory* so inclined concerning

those matters, he says, one ought also to consider concerning us that things may not turn out otherwise.

In another way. See how he leads them away from bodily things, and meanwhile from place, attributing glory to God, not to place. For he himself is the source of glory, not in need of the glory which is by us through the temple. But when Scripture says that Terah was the father of Abraham and had gone out from Ur to set out from the land of the Chaldeans, how now does Stephen attribute this oracle to Abraham himself? (see Gen 11:26-32) To which it can be said that indeed the divine response was given to Abraham, but Scripture attributes it to the father, because the sons did not contradict the counsel which was from the divine oracle, although the father was the one who left, this example revealing the disobedience of those present. For, since they would not be convicted of being disobedient when Terah did not oppose the counsel of his son, yet after the experience of divine signs would they not, not only unbelieving, but even with envy and hostilely attacking them in slaughter, persecute those who deserved to be glorified because of divine signs?

Acts 7:5b-18 ***And he promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his seed after him, though he had no child. But God spoke therefore: that his seed shall be sojourners in a foreign land, and they shall enslave them, and afflict them four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall serve, I will judge, said God. And after that they shall come forth and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Isaac was born, and he was circumcised on the eighth day, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, envying Joseph, sent him into Egypt. And God was with him, and delivered him out of all his***

afflictions. And he gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And he made him governor over Egypt and over his whole house. And there came a famine over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great distress, and our fathers found no food. But when Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there first. And in the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And Joseph's kindred was made visible to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent and called his father Jacob, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he and our fathers died, and they were carried to Sychem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor of Sychem. And as the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until another king arose who did not know Joseph.

In many ways, through the present discourse the blessed Stephen refutes both his own gentleness toward the Jews and their ferocity toward him. For when he addresses them as brothers and fathers, what else is shown by these names than the proper relation of kinship? to behave toward them accordingly? And the Jews, enduring this little while, were somewhat disposed to regard with wicked suspicion the signs performed through him; therefore Stephen, encountering their wickedness arising from racial spite, speaks with greater boldness. And he shows the promise to the fathers, in which they placed great confidence, made before the land existed, before circumcision, before sacrifice, before the temple. And that these men did not receive circumcision nor the law according to merit, but that the reward of obedience alone was the land. And that the promise is not fulfilled by the giving of circumcision, and that these were types. Consider, however, that if Terah was not a companion of the pilgrimage with his son

Abraham because he was unworthy, much more so his sons, even if they have performed a great part of the journey. Abraham therefore was so obedient that, moved only by the oracle, he abandoned both kinship and homeland. If he behaved so, how shall those who are found disobedient in all things be reckoned among the sons of Abraham? For it is not the nativity of life but the imitation of manners that confers ancestry: for therefore even to monsters born of ill fortune what is legitimate and natural could be attributed. In this way, although he does not proceed in the order of discourse, yet advancing by a great abbreviation of speech and by the progress of understanding, and reproving their boldness even unto the passion of Christ, he suffered what was plausible for him to endure, who had been accusing the wicked. And he promised that he would give to him. Hereafter the story of Abraham proceeds, which altogether recounts the patriarch's patience up to the fulfillment of the promises. For he shows Abraham and his descendants, who were long-suffering concerning the divine promises, to be exceedingly famous, while resembling in negligence the present hearers then, who themselves will immediately share in their calamities together with them, their goods which they hoped for having been taken away from their hands.

All these things, however, are small, if measured to the ultimate heroism directed toward Christ. Therefore they are hard-hearted and uncircumcised in heart, and their ears are clogged. For which reason they were murderers of the prophets, bringing destruction upon themselves, and even of Christ, who will repay to them both destruction and their final scattering. So great, then, are the things that it is possible to see in this brief sermon of the most wise preacher Stephen, endowed with divine wisdom, of which, according to our limitation, we have yet settled the understood meaning, taken according to the quality of the discourse given to us, contracting the end together with the beginning: in that very

sermon, from which this divine outflow, flowing forth here, issued, delighting us. Now it will be useful to interpret in parts also those things which require a longer delay, according to our ability. For the history assumed of Abraham and thereafter of his descendants is not taken up to strengthen the preacher for no reason: but that it may be shown both the ready obedience of the ancestors concerning what is divine, and the disobedience of the descendants on account of wicked manners.

The first example is taken from Abraham, showing that one ought not to hasten what is delayed by divine promises, for Abraham indeed sought to hasten the departure of his descendants from Egypt: although it was revealed to him that their imprisonment was to be prolonged for four hundred years, and that with much affliction and subjection into slavery, and not merely some subjection, but intolerable, since they were treated not as servants but as enemies. And certainly, Abraham offers no petition for shortening the time, but only a little encouragement by way of comfort, namely by promising vengeance against those who afflicted them, from him who had promised to judge those who had viciously killed them, who had themselves brought no injury. Moreover, he is encouraged to await the promises to be fulfilled from Persia into Palestine, and not to pervert the promise into impossibility on account of the long delay and the greatness of the matters, since everything rests in the power of the one who promises, how great then is the confidence of him who desires God about it? Furthermore, the envy of the brothers against Joseph is placed before us, and the forgetting of injuries, in that, when he could have done so, he did not take vengeance on those who had wronged him, but rather returned benefits. After these things is added their rebuke, who were openly and furiously moved against Christ and his disciples.

<u>Acts 7:19</u> ***Having shrewdly corrupted our race, he ruined our fathers by causing their infants to be exposed so that they would not be brought to life.***

Having become crafty, that is resolved to outwit them by cunning devices. For sophistry is a forced explanation. Wherefore the emphasis here says that it is plain they are violently imposed upon; therefore the charlatans are called sophists, as those who hide the truth by deceit and fallacies. Following what has been said concerning Abraham, the account of the trading shows the hardship of his descendants under the Egyptians. Whose counterstroke is the refreshing destruction of the Egyptians, which it was foretold would be wrought upon them by God himself at the Red Sea. In case under the burden of sufferings, despair of salvation should lead them to slide into unbelief. Consider also the pledge of the faith of those to whom promises are made. What is that? Circumcision of the genital parts, known to them alone and not to others who have not suffered. From these things indeed springs the compelling proof of those who conduct these affairs.

But even at the time when deliverance for the afflicted was drawing near, the arrogance of the oppressors, having increased, introduced destruction of the males by the midwives. Moreover, as to the other evils it chiefly led to an increase in the number of the afflicted, here, in order to condemn the crimes, it unexpectedly rescues even Moses, who was to destroy them, and esteems him worthy of royal nurture and care. Why was this also mentioned? To show that even now those who arm themselves against Christ and his disciples do not recognize that they will meet with like fates, being seized in the very works of their hands. The sign of circumcision is meant to indicate this on the generative members. The covering placed upon the ancestors in paradise, having sprung from the envy of the original evil serpent, from which it also seemed more credible than the act of God concerning the taste of the tree. Circumcision introduced the removal of this for one who

turns to live toward God, commanding the cutting out according to the Mosaic legislation of customs from birth.

Moreover, this season of visitation according to Christ also appears. During which all shadowy and typical things are transferred to the truth according to the Gospel. Therefore those who do not endure being so transformed are represented as hard of neck and uncircumcised, hard-hearted with regard to subjection to the Divine Spirit, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, as not enduring to devote matters suitably to the times. But if it was remarkable in Joseph that although he was sold by his brothers, he nonetheless preserved those same men: this is more marvelous still, that the king nourished him who was about to depose him of his rule. But by showing that he had the infants exposed he indicated that he did not wish them to be killed openly. See how the Devil by those things advanced the promise of God, by which he strove to dissolve it. Moses is cast into exile, but in exile he attains that vision, and the leadership of the people is entrusted to him: therefore he even makes the sold servant reign where the servant was held. (Wis. 10:14) And Christ himself in death demonstrated power and strength; so wise is God, and his providence incomprehensible. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 7:20-24a ***At that time Moses was born. And he was pleasing to God, who was nursed three months in his father's house. But when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him up and reared him as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in deeds and words. And when forty years of his life were fulfilled, he resolved in his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. And seeing one wronged, he was outraged, and he executed vengeance for the oppressed.***

At that time, then, Moses was born, it says, *and he was pleasing to God*, that is, well-pleasing or beloved of God. The word "pleasing" primarily signifies one sinless in body in childhood. When he was exposed and *Pharaoh's daughter took him up*, she taught *him all the wisdom of the Egyptians*. From this it is clear that external instruction outside the Scriptures is not entirely rejectable. For in the manner of praise it is said that Moses was educated *in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*. And concerning the three youths and Daniel, that they excelled all in Chaldean philosophy and in the other sciences. (Dan. 1:17) Yet one must attend to these things briefly, remaining faithful to the God-breathed Scripture.

For neither Moses nor those about Ananias and Daniel would have learned foreign education except under force and by power of masters. And indeed they made no use of it at all, unless one might say perhaps that it was good to learn it for the purpose of overthrowing their deceits. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 7:24b ***Having struck the Egyptian.***

Moses killed the Egyptian, not moved by anger or wrath, but by zeal. For whatever is done for the sake of God's word is devoutness; and though it be murder when done for God, it is not murder. Now Phinehas, having slain two with one hand (Num. 15:7), was heard: "Phinehas has stood up and has made atonement, and the plague was stayed; and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." (Ps. 106:30) For the intention of a murderer and of a holy man is different, though the act be the same. Therefore the event through Moses was a sign that God was about to slay Egyptians through Moses and to save those called Israelites. Therefore much concerning Moses. This true discourse will again compose for us the supreme arrangement of contemplation that was in Christ.

For the Savior, seeing that those from Israel endured covetousness terribly (for Satan leapt upon them as though crushing them), had mercy and intended to free them. Having somehow killed the one destined to do wrong, he hid him in the earth, that is, he shut him up among the underworld into Hades. Therefore, having pre-locked Satan as it were into Hades, the Savior appeared as the champion of justice to those from Israel. But those on whom they were about to give thanks said, "This man does not cast out demons unless by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons." (Matt. 12:24) For this reason he also transferred from Judea into Galilee, just as Moses was transferred into the land of Midian, and he called together a contest from among the nations.

> **Acts 7:25-29** ***He supposed his brothers understood that God was giving them salvation through his hand. But they did not understand. On the next day he appeared to them as they were fighting, and reconciled them, saying, "Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong one another?" But the one wronging his neighbor pushed him away, saying, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses fled after that speech, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he fathered two sons.***

He declares, then, that this ingratitude arose from here, and against the benefactors [εὐεργέτας[1]] it was treacherous among the Jews. For Moses, who in anger once struck down the wrongdoer, his fellow-countryman, is now treated with leniency toward the wrongdoer. But he who used his native customs to commit wicked acts against benefactors rejected him, by slandering him even more, and sought destruction, surrounding the deliverer with the murder of the Egyptian who had done Moses wrong. Therefore they plotted the ruin of their benefactor in manner and against

Christ for his supports. Therefore they say: "What shall we do, for this man performs many signs?" (Jn. 11:47)

> **<u>Acts 7:30-32a</u>** ***And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in a flame of fire out of a bush. But Moses, seeing it, wondered at the vision. And as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came to him: I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.***

Now he calls the Son of God an angel, just as elsewhere he calls him a man. For he is the angel of great counsel. (Isa. 9:6 LXX) Therefore shortly afterwards he shows him speaking to the blessed Moses: "*I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob*." He is revealed *in a flame of fire* in *a bush*. For in the form of *fire* and on *Mount Sinai* God appears while giving the law. What then does the passage mean? The sacred text likens the divine nature to fire because it overpowers wood and grass, that is, man. For it says somewhere: "God is a consuming fire." (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29) And again, "Man, his days are as grass." (Ps. 103:15) But just as fire is not carried off by thorns, so deity is not borne away by humanity. Yet in Christ it happened and became as if subdued, a kind of surrounding of the unmingled assault of the fire of his own nature, so that it might be able to be held, just as fire is by thorns. That the fire upon the bush, having kept the wood entirely unconsumed, might mysteriously indicate that he made his own flesh stronger than corruption, for the deity had taken up residence in humanity. And this mystery occurred in Christ.

Acts 7:32b-36 ***Frightened, Moses did not dare to look closely. But the Lord said to him, "Take off the sandals from your feet; for the place where you are standing is holy ground." I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I have come down to deliver them. Now therefore, go, and I will send you to Egypt. This Moses, whom they refused, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?"—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, performing signs and wonders in Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years.***

Even if the voice as worded in Exodus does not appear to be exactly the same, nevertheless it is equivalent. For the one who trembles is not far from becoming fearful. These things are said about the vision of the bush, the same distinction between the fearful and the trembling remaining, and in the account concerning Mount Sinai. For Moses said there: "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling," (Heb. 12:21) using parallel words. Therefore the blessed Moses, having set down the vision, then added perhaps saying to himself, "I will go over and see this great sight, why does the bush not burn up?" (Ex. 3:3) but the Lord immediately forbids him, "Do not come near here." (Ex. 3:5) And he commands him to remove the shoe from his sandal. Behold, he whom the angel spoke of earlier now shows him to be Lord and God. For he is the angel of the great counsel (Isa. 9:6 LXX) and Son of God.

What then is the riddle signified by the *sandal*? It is necessary to say that the sandal is a sign of death and corruption. For every sandal is a remnant of an animal already dead. Therefore the mind attempting to ascend to the divine contemplations must cast off every dead and fleshly imagination like some pair of sandals, and

understand the mystery according to Christ. Christ is therefore inaccessible under the law and the instructional worship (for Moses is the face of the law), unless perhaps they had first cleansed the defilement from sin and repelled the worship that is still in types and shadows. But if they were willing to be freed from the sandal already indicated, they would then draw near to Christ, approaching the worship in Spirit and in truth. (Jn. 4:24)

<u>Acts 7:37a</u> ***This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel: A Prophet will the Lord your God raise up for you from among your brethren, like me.***

This the blessed Stephen brought forward, hinting to them the mystery according to Christ, and showing that Moses also had spoken to you about him. For God and Father announces again the incarnation of His own offspring through the all-wise Moses, and that a second lawgiver will be raised up for us, having spoken the law formerly to the earlier ones himself through angels, and in the last times revealed as a worker for us, and having sent an angel as agent of the New Covenant, the angel of the great counsel of the Father. And this is what the phrase "*like me*" indicates, that is, as lawgiver. But he calls the Lord of the prophets a prophet because of his humanity. "*like me*," treated with contempt by those from whom he ought to have received honor. Each gave a law, having previously done signs; yet even therefore neither of them were willing to obey.

<u>Acts 7:37b-42</u> ***You shall hear him. This is the one who became in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received a living word to give to us. How unwilling were our fathers to be obedient, but they pushed away and***

turned their hearts to Egypt, saying to Aaron: Make for us gods who will go before us. For this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. And they practiced idolatry in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idols, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them up to serve the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: "Did you offer me victims and sacrifice for forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?"

Consider that at first they brought them *offering sacrifices*, and then that they offered them *to idols*. For previously the name "sacrifices" is nowhere found, but there were precepts concerning living and rational animals. The testimony, however, does not introduce this randomly, but so as to show that there is no necessity for sacrifices, in that he says: "*Did you not offer me victims and sacrifices*," etc., as if he says: You cannot say that when you were sacrificing to God you also offered them to those idols, but that you first slaughtered them for those idols. And this indeed was in the desert where your delay was longest. See moreover the whole discourse, how boldly and without malice he perseveres throughout the accusation of them, almost saying: And if I were to say the temple ought to be dissolved, and the instituted sacrifices to be changed, I have said nothing new. For *Moses*, in whom you seem to boast most, for forty years neither offered sacrifices nor built a temple, nor did David, nor any one of the others placed in the midst of you, although the land was given to you. But the prophets also pronounce concerning these things as about unnecessary matters. In what way then do you now pretend to avenge Moses, whom both your fathers and you rejected? And to say it in one word, the whole discourse shows how wisely and at the same time modestly and keenly their accusation is unraveled.

Acts 7:43 ***And you shall take up the tabernacle of Molech, and the star of your god Rephan, the images which you made to worship them. And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.***

Moloch, or Molchom. This is an idol of the Moabites, a stone having a transparent and extraordinary appearance in the form of the morning star [ἑωσφόρου[2]] on the tip of the forehead. *Rephan* is a form of darkness.. For when Moses had ascended the mountain, they fashioned a calf and bowed down to the worship of the stars, and having made a shrine they set up the image which they called *Moloch*. Moloch, if one interprets it, is their king; *Rephan*, however, is darkness or blindness. "You have taken up the tabernacle of Moloch," that is, of your king; but who is that? The star of your god, Rephan, which also was for you to your blindness. For your hearts have been darkened. *[CYRIL: ON THE PROPHET AMOS]*

And because you filled up the madness of the Moabites, which is the region near Damascus, therefore you depart beyond Damascus, that is, into *Babylon*. *[CYRIL]*

And although the prophet says "beyond Damascus" (for so the Septuagint translation has it), yet blessed Stephen says "*beyond Babylon*," following the Hebrew edition, or because Damascus is the boundary of the Syrians' region, namely Babylon.[3]

Acts 7:44-46 ***The tent of testimony was among our fathers in the wilderness, as he who spoke to Moses had ordered, to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. Our fathers also, who received it with Jesus, brought it in after they had captured the nations whose land God had stripped from before the faces of our fathers, until the***

days of David; who found favor before God. And he sought to find a dwelling-place for the God of Jacob.

The tent of testimony, that is, of the commands of God, which was the tent of Moses shown by God on Mount Sinai. It was said to have been established by God so that they would have God as witness, because its explanation was on the mountain, and he himself had described it to Moses.

Acts 7:47-50 ***But Solomon built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands, as the prophet says: "The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?"***

In the four hundred eightieth year after the exodus of the sons of Israel from Egypt, Solomon began to build the temple in Jerusalem, as the third book of Kings relates. (1 Kings 6:1) Moreover the temple was built so long after the ascent of Israel from Egypt that, after they had toiled wandering in the mountains, they chose one place, which was in Jerusalem, which God had held in honor. These men, however, being slow of understanding and ignorant of the words of God, thinking that Jerusalem was the city of God, said that God dwelt only therein. God therefore refutes them because they excessively glorified him, and he says: *What house will you build for me*, who have *heaven for a throne, and the earth for the footstool of my feet?* For to those who supposed his nature to be confined and limited it was necessary to show openly that He is everywhere and that nothing is capable of containing him, but rather that he passes through all things, and the heaven is full of him, and the earth is full as well.

Acts 7:51a ***Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.***

For what reason, when he had yet been speaking gently, does he now use a harsh tone? Because he saw that they were not paying attention with their minds to the things that were being said.

Acts 7:51b ***You always resist the Holy Spirit.***

"*You always resist the Holy Spirit*." He did not say, "you resist God," but, "the Holy Spirit." Therefore he recognizes no distinction, since the Spirit is also God, even if he does not appear so to the godless. Therefore *you always*, he says, *resist* God. For when he desires that sacrifices be made, you do not sacrifice to him; but when he does not desire it, you sacrifice. When the temple stood, you served idols. When he wishes to be served apart from a temple, you do the opposite, acting like your forefathers.

Acts 7:51c ***As your fathers, so you also.***

It shows the evil descending from above into them. So did Christ. Since great things were always being prayed for on behalf of the *fathers*.

Acts 7:52a ***Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?***

Speaking these things we know that the blessed Stephen speaks the truth, being spoken through by the Holy Spirit. But to prove this from the Old Testament how those who disbelieve in Jesus blame their *fathers* for persecuting and killing *the prophets* is not

possible from the books presented as the New Testament. *[ORIGEN]*

If then, he says, you kill those who foretold his coming, it is nothing remarkable that I, proclaiming the foretold one, should be killed by you. Nor was he ignorant that he would die at their hands, being full of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he also used boldness without restraint.

> **<u>Acts 7:52b-53</u>** ***And they killed those who had foretold the coming of the righteous one, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers. You who received the law as commands delivered by angels and did not keep it.***

He calls him *righteous*, showing that if he is righteous, those who killed him are exceedingly unjust. And he calls him righteous, which even they could not deny. For nowhere, even being very stubborn, did they accuse him of any injustice. For how could they, who had not even a roof? But he called Jesus righteous, wishing to draw them.

And he calls these his *betrayers and murderers*, as being partners with those who crucified him, and indeed, he says, having *received the law*, they hold *commands*, some of them making the bringing of an offering equivalent to the conduct of those who pay the tax. *[AMMONIUS]*

For this is, "certain of you have *received the law as commands of angels*." And some also say this, that the one who was ordered by angels and entrusted through an angel to Moses, the one who appeared to him in the bush. "As regulations," instead of "according to the commands," just as those gave orders to Moses, having appeared in the bush and on the mountain. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 7:54-55</u> ***Hearing these things, their hearts were torn, and they gnashed their teeth at him. Being full of the Holy Spirit, having looked up to heaven, he saw the glory of God.***

If they had wished to kill him, why did they not immediately kill him then? For they wished to put a credible cause upon the boldness. For to them the outrage was not a reasonable cause for execution, but perhaps for driving him away or chastising him, not for killing him. Otherwise the outrage would not have been his, but the prophet's accusation against them. And they did not wish to seem to be killing him because of the outrages against them, just as they did not wish to kill Christ. For they did not intend murder, but were eager to harm his honor. For they feared that if he were not put to death for insulting them, he might become the more revered.

<u>Acts 7:56</u> ***And Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said: Behold I see the heavens lifted up, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.***

Standing and not sitting, the blessed Stephen sees *Jesus*, in order to show the attention directed toward him, and to provide the contestant with great eagerness; the posture of the one assisting is shown: Moreover, since sitting was burdensome for them, he said first that he stood, hinting at his resurrection; but because he does not stand, but sits, Paul indicated by saying that he raised and sat down together, at his *right hand* in the heavenly places. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 7:56b–57a ***Shouting with a loud voice, they stopped their ears and all together rushed upon him. And having dragged him out of the city, they began to stone him.***

They continued, who had falsely testified against the saint.

Acts 7:57b–58 ***And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, who called upon the Lord and kept saying.***

A witness says, whom they induced to bear false witness against him. And he points out the men who seemed to be *witnesses*, that they were more prepared for murder, for even *their garments* they *laid* aside to be nimble and light for casting stones. And he says that the one who would later be a messenger of the inhabited world also then took part in the murder, showing that some divine and wondrous and not merely human was the later change in him. And this, "O Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," was being shown and taught, that he is not destroyed.

Acts 7:59a ***O Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.***

Therefore it is shown that the souls of the righteous no longer depart into Hades, as formerly, but are rather sent into the hands of the living God through our Savior Christ. *[SAINT CYRIL ON "FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT."]*

Acts 7:59b ***Kneeling down, he cried out in a loud voice, "O Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And having said this he fell asleep. But Saul was approving of his execution.***

That his own death, when he prayed, would not place them into sin if their sin was forgiven, this is what he sought to be fitting. And we say, if they repented, it was forgiven. For even he who struck him with countless hands, and Paul who persecuted the Church, became protector of the Church. *[SAINT CYRIL ON "FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT."]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 7.

1. εὐεργέτας is the accusative plural form of the Ancient Greek noun εὐεργέτης (euergetēs), which means "benefactor" or "doer of good"

2. “the morning star [ἑωσφόρου] The Greek word ἑωσφόρου is the genitive form of Ἑωσφόρος. In ancient Greece, it referred to the Morning Star—specifically the planet Venus when it appears in the eastern sky just before sunrise. In mythology it personified as a minor deity, often depicted as a winged youth carrying a torch, heralding the arrival of the goddess Eos (Dawn). In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament): In Isaiah 14:12, the Hebrew word helel (shining one) was translated as Ἑωσφόρος. In the Latin Vulgate, this became Lucifer, which eventually became a name associated with Satan in Christian tradition.

3. The explanation given concerning the reading from the Septuagint vs Stephen about “beyond Babylon” is also found in Cramer’s Catena, and the source given is attributed to Nicholas the Presbyter.

CHAPTER 8

On the persecution of the Church, and the burial of Stephen: in which is also treated of Philip the apostle, who healed many in Samaria.

Acts 8:1-4a ***Now on that day there arose a great persecution against the Church that was in Jerusalem. And all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men carried***

Stephen away, and greatly wept over him. But Saul ravaged the Church, entering house after house, dragging off both men and women and delivering them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

See how God turns the plots of his enemies to a beneficial end. For though they scattered, they brought in far more than before being driven away. But the apostles were not scattered; they were in Jerusalem. For where the persecution was greatest, there the leaders ought to be drawn up and set before the others as an example of courage and boldness. If those who buried Stephen were devout, how did they become despairing? Is it because they were not yet perfect, or because they were deprived of such protection, such teaching, such signs, and because they saw him gentle and kind as dead and crushed by stones?

Acts 8:4b-9a ***Philip, having gone down to a city of Samaria, proclaimed Christ to them. The crowds paid attention to the things spoken by Philip, being of one mind in listening to him, and in seeing the signs which he performed. For many who had unclean spirits crying out with loud voice came forth. Many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.***

Not the apostle Philip who is counted among the twelve is this, but one of the seven, the one chosen with Stephen for the administration of the widows. That it is true is clear from here. For of the apostles only those left behind in Jerusalem, while the rest of the disciples were scattered elsewhere, as has already been said; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Among those who were scattered was this Philip, who also instructed Simon in Samaria, and having baptized the Eunuch by a divine oracle, was found by the Spirit of

the Lord at Azotus, and then hurried on to Caesarea where he also came to be. For being tried by the persecution against Stephen, and fearing for fear that he share the lot of his partners, he returned home. Moreover, if the one who baptized in Samaria had been one of the apostles, he would have had the authority to bestow the gift of the Spirit, and Peter and John would not have had to come down from Jerusalem to confer the gift of the Spirit upon them. This one therefore baptizes only as a disciple; the apostles perfect the grace, to whom the authority for such a bestowal had been given. *[LETTER FROM ISIDORE]*

About Simon the Magician, who believed and was baptized along with many others; in which is an account concerning the sending of Peter and John to him, and the request of the Holy Spirit upon those who had been baptized.

Acts 8:9b-15 ***Now there was a man named Simon who had previously lived in the city, practicing magic and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; to him they paid attention, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God, that great one." They paid attention to him because for a long time his magic had astonished them. But when they believed Philip, who proclaimed the good news concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Simon himself also believed, and after being baptized he continued closely following Philip, observing the signs and powers that were occurring, and he was amazed. When the apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; these, upon coming down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.***

It should be noted here that one must not approach magicians: for if one, being deceived, does approach them, he should be separated from them as quickly as possible; for perseverance in such things brings about stupor of mind, so that one cannot understand to judge. Thus Simon, although he was a magician and flattered the apostles, and although, like others, he had been baptized by Philip, who was one of the seven, he nevertheless did not receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands.. What then? Did those baptized by Philip not receive the Holy Spirit? They received the Holy Spirit of remission, but they did not receive the Spirit of miracles. Therefore Simon, seeing that it is given through the laying on of hands, came to the apostles, daring to trade with him. For before he saw others receiving the Spirit of miracles he was not bold to ask. How then did Philip baptize such a man? As Christ chose also Judas. And why did they not remove him as Ananias? Because once in the old time one who gathered the wood was put to death as a chastisement to others, and no other suffered this. One can recognize that in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit something perceptible and remarkable took place. For Simon would not have approached otherwise, had he not seen this. How, then, without seeing the apostles doing this with money, did he dare to offer money? It was not ignorance, but a temptation. Therefore Peter also, showing "Your heart is not right," (Acts 8:21) indicates that even what had been formed in his mind did not escape him. See moreover the shamelessness of Simon. For he ought to have asked to receive the Holy Spirit, since he did not care for this himself, but in order that he might give it to others he asked. For he also wished to be more illustrious than Philip. For Philip, being one of the seven and a deacon, did not have authority by his laying on of hands to give the Holy Spirit. That this is true, and that he did not receive the Spirit of miracles, see how he says that, seeing powers and signs being done, he was amazed, and came up asking for this. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 8:16-17</u> ***For they had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.***

It is obvious that those baptized by Philip in Samaria had not received the Holy Spirit, because they did not have such a gift; since he, as we said, was one of the seven. For these men received power to do miracles, but not to give the Spirit to others; for this was the special privilege of the apostles. Moreover, Philip did not confer the Spirit upon those baptized by him, either out of respect to the apostles. For not that he was worthless and unworthy (although he himself is recorded as having done miracles in healing diseases and casting out demons), but because he did not wish this gift to be present to them, as they were not in a prime condition fit to receive the Spirit, wherefore also Simon, having been baptized by him, thinking in the prime of his flesh to obtain from the apostles the power by giving money, that he might give the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands to whomever he wished. *[AMMONIUS]*

<u>Acts 8:18-19a</u> ***Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this authority, that whoever I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."***

This wicked man Simon, offering the money not out of faith that this would come to him, but so that this might be a source of gain and an occasion for acquiring money, he came up, therefore, having received such favor, to become wealthy through signs, performing acts by demons according to his former delusion, that

is, testing the apostles, he did this, wishing to cast an accusation. Therefore he hears: "You have neither part nor portion in this matter; for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore, if indeed that you may be forgiven of your sin." (Acts 8:20-21) For Peter foreknew that he would not turn to repentance. Therefore he says, "that you may be forgiven of your sin." For the phrase "Pray for you" (Acts 8:22) did not imply repentance and return, but only because of devotion he said this; since where are the tears and the confession? This indicates that the matter is hard to achieve and requires great repentance of those who sin against the divine gift itself, into which Simon likewise erred, submitting silver in regard to the operations of the Holy Spirit.

That the sharing of the Holy Spirit is given not for money nor to hypocrites, but to those holy through faith; in which matters concerning the hypocrisy and rebuke of Simon.

Acts 8:19b-25 ***But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money. You have neither part nor portion in this matter; for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray to the Lord that, if perhaps, the intention of your heart may be forgiven. For I see that you are in the irritation of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me." Those who, testifying and speaking the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and they preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.***

"*Your silver perish with you*." This is not spoken as if to one being forgiven, but as disciplining, one might say: "Let your money perish with your choice." Peter does not now punish Simon as he

formerly punished Ananias, in order to show that faith is not compelled, but in order also to introduce the elements of repentance. For to rebuke, to speak what is in the heart, and for that man to confess that he is guilty, is necessary for correction. For the saying, "*Pray for me*," is that of one confessing, even if it was not spoken from a right and wholehearted disposition. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

That God grants salvation to the good and faithful is clear from the account concerning the eunuch.

Acts 8:26-32a ***An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza; this is a desert." And he rose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, had come to Jerusalem to worship; he was returning and sitting in his chariot and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Draw near and join this chariot." So Philip ran up and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture he was reading was this.***

For what reason does an angel not appear to the eunuch but instead leads him to Philip? Because perhaps he would not have believed, but would have been more terrified. For he was not like Cornelius.

"*go toward the south*." He would not have been going from Jerusalem toward the south, but toward the north; but from Samaria, where Philip of the seven was residing and teaching then, the road is toward the south.

He said, however, "*this is a desert*," so as not to fear the oversight of the Jews.

The women of Ethiopia, who obeyed her, among whom one in succession was *Candace*: whose eunuch was over the chamber of the royal treasures. It should be known that the Ethiopians call every king's mother Candace: for the Ethiopians do not mention a king's father, but they hand them down as if true sons of the sun: and they call the mother of each one Candace.

<u>Acts 8:32b-36a</u> ***Like a lamb led to the slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away. Who will declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, "I urge you to tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? About himself, or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said.***

From this point the voluntary act of the Savior is signified in the trial of those being allotted with. For as a sheep led to sacrifice, or a lamb before the one who shaves it (forced and subdued, it does not even have the capacity to moan), so he was silent willingly in his suffering. (see Isa. 53:7-8) *[THEODORE OF HERACLEA]*

The phrase, "*In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*," indicates the unlawful judgment that was made against him, the truth of which was hidden. *[THEODORE OF HERACLEA]*

And the question, "*Who will declare his generation*?" when brought forward shows him to be without genealogy. For he was indeed without genealogy as God, and born according to the flesh

as one recorded. That is, who will be able adequately to relate in words the trial that occurred after the resurrection, and his noble worth, which the trial of those managed by him demonstrated? He was subjected to death, and by his grace he gave life to all into incorruption, and redeemed by faith. *[THEODORE OF HERACLEA]*

Then he says, "*For his life is taken from the earth*," that is, it is lifted up, and his life is higher than the things on earth, that is, his society. It is also taken in another sense, and his life is above all, that is, the existence of the Only-Begotten, when thought of apart from the flesh and not yet become toward us. *[CYRIL]*

For his life, having voluntarily descended unto death, was taken up from the earth, was raised upward, and ascended above the heavens (Ps. 8:3), because he was a king of glory, and his life by nature, and Lord of hosts; even if because of the providence concerning us and the voluntary self-emptying, who endured on earth the dishonor and obscurity due to his suffering, this may reasonably be ascribed to him because of the flesh united to him according to hypostasis and inseparably, with respect to which was the passion, and therefore came the dishonor mentioned above; bold as it was on the part of God regarding the incarnate one, yet unable to touch the impassible, which is impossible. *[FROM THE TREATISE TO JULIAN]*

Therefore this is Jesus, and Philip proclaims this Scripture to the eunuch, that it is fulfilled in him; and the eunuch, having believed and immediately baptized, was sent to the regions of Ethiopia, proclaiming that which he himself had believed: that there is one God foretold by the prophets, and that this One's Son has already been made present according to humanity, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and the other things which the prophets say about him. And here the prophecy is fulfilled that says, "Ethiopia will hasten her hand to God." (Ps. 68:31) *[EUSEBIUS]*

<u>Acts 8:36a-38</u> ***Behold water; what prevents me from being baptized? Philip said, If you believe with your whole heart, you may. The eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He ordered the chariot to stop; and both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.***

It should be observed that great zeal existed among Christians entirely for the sensible [αἰσθητὸν[1]] baptism. Since what is given is twofold, sometimes through water, sometimes in the Holy Spirit and fire, they did not despise the more bodily one on account of the superiority of the baptism in the Spirit. For this also contributes to salvation and to the resurrection of the body. *[DIDYMUS]*

<u>Acts 8:39-40</u> ***When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord seized Philip, and the eunuch did not see him any longer. For he was going on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And as he passed through he was preaching the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.***

The Spirit seized Philip, for though the eunuch had indeed wished to converse, Philip, refusing and denying because it was not yet time, nevertheless would have grieved him. Philip himself also gained very much profit, seeing that what he had heard in Ezekiel and Habakkuk was fulfilled in him[2]. It is further shown that the journey was long if he was found at Azotus. For there he placed him where it was fitting that he should afterward preach, and from there to depart into Caesarea, his country. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 8.

1. Αἰσθητόν is an Ancient Greek adjective/noun meaning "perceptible by the senses" "sensible" or "perceptible". It refers to things that can be known through sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell, as opposed to intellectual or intelligible objects.

2. Oecumenius draws this from Chrysostom, but there doesn't appear to be an explicit link of Philip in Acts to specific prophecies in Ezekiel or Habakkuk. The miraculous, sudden transport of Philip by the Spirit from the Gaza road to Azotus is noted as a parallel to the experiences of the prophets (that is, 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16).

CHAPTER 9

On the divine calling of Paul from heaven to the apostleship of Christ; in which is treated the healing and baptism of Paul by Ananias according to the revelation of God, and his boldness and the encounter through Barnabas with the apostles.

Acts 9:1-9a ***But Saul, still breathing*** [ἐμπνέων[1]] ***threats and murder against the Lord's disciples, approached the high priest and asked for letters from him to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any who belonged to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he was going, he came near Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the rods*** [κέντρα[2]]***." Trembling and astonished, he said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men who were***

traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and though his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus, and for three days he was without sight.

who belonged to the Way. They called it *the Way*, the faith toward Christ our true God, which the apostles proclaimed; and rightly so. For through it we enter into the kingdom of the heavens, and not by any other. But in a truer sense one must hear the civic way, as in Isaiah: "Why have they deceived us from your way?" (Isa. 63:17) that is, the conduct according to you. Therefore here he called the Way the civic conduct according to Christ. And in other places where he mentions *the Way*, he means the proclamation according to Christ and the conduct according to him. Perhaps also they called them so to mock and vilify them. For they are accustomed to call a worthless man a man of the way. He did not seek authority there to punish them, but to lead them to *Jerusalem*, because with greater authority he wished to act in these matters. The vision does not occur in a city, but on the *road* in quiet, so that it might not be possible for others to relate otherwise what happened about him, but that he himself would be credible to relate that he had seen the vision and undergone the suffering. He does not blind everyone except Paul alone, so that the suffering might not be thought common and accidental, but of divine providence. Why then did those *with him* not believe? So that they might be credible witnesses attesting concerning Paul. For if they had believed, they would have seemed to testify in favor out of courtesy.

"*hearing the voice*." Those who were with Paul did not hear a voice from above, but Paul's voice. And they saw no one to whom he answered; Paul alone saw the one from above. For when they led him in, Paul himself says, "Those who were with me saw the light and became afraid, but they did not hear the voice of the one

speaking to me." (Acts 22:9) For if they had heard that voice, they would not have believed. Seeing Paul answer, they were amazed. And this did not happen at first so that it might be shown truly that Christ rose. For the man who was persecuting him and disbelieving in his resurrection, and who was persecuting his disciples, how could he have believed unless the power of the resurrection were great? *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 9:9b ***And he neither ate nor drank.***

Why? Because he judged himself most harshly over the persecution of the Church, and, grieved, he begged God to be forgiven.

Acts 9:10-12 ***Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." But the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he is praying." And he saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.***

Why, I ask, did he not bring any one of the great men who was worthy of trust, or hand him over to the instruction of Paul, but Ananias who was one of the seventy? Since he was not to be led by men, but by Christ himself. For this one neither taught him anything, but only baptized him. For having been enlightened at once he was about to draw much grace of the Spirit from zeal and eagerness. From this it must be noted that those dreams ought to be told which are of public benefit, and contribute to piety, whatever has the presence of the Lord or of angels. There are also private dreams which ought not to be spoken. Yet, if the benefit is

private to Saul but a strange healing has occurred, the man is again invited to piety; and therefore it ought to have been spoken of as beneficial to all.

"*Arise, go*." And this Ananias was a deacon, as Paul himself testifies in the canons[3]. This happened because there was no elder present in Damascus on account of the persecution. *[AMMONIUS]*

"And he saw *in a vision*." For he could not see bodily, since he was blind.

Acts 9:13-17a ***And Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many concerning this man how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is a chosen vessel of mine to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake." So Ananias departed and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul."***

"*I have heard of him from many*." Therefore says Ananias, not as one disbelieving the reports, nor thinking that Christ had been deceived, God forbid! but fearing and trembling. For it was reasonable that, being in fear, they would analyze him to learn what had been determined concerning them (for how else could it be clear to them that he even held authority from the chief priests?), and say, since these things are so, how can these things happen? What then did the Lord, who searches the hearts, testify concerning Paul? He shows that wickedness is not natural to him. *[AMMONIUS]*

For he says that he *is a chosen vessel*. For this reason, he says, he has shown that he is approved; for an approved thing is selected as a vessel. And not only will he be faithful, he says, but also a teacher and preacher to the world, and many will be persuaded on my account. For this reason he says that he *is a chosen vessel of mine*, and that he will *carry my name*. But when Ananias heard that Paul was blind, he rejoiced, and almost with his words he says this: "He is well off, let him remain blind; why do you order me to open his eyes? that he may be conquered again? that he may be punished again?" Therefore he says: "Not only will he do no harm, but he will also endure many things on my behalf."

Acts 9:17b-19 ***The Lord sent me, the one who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes; he regained his sight and, rising up, was baptized, and having received food he was strengthened. Now Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some days.***

"*the one who appeared to you*." But Christ did not say to Annanias: I appeared to him, but he learned this from the Holy Spirit. And indeed he was not seen. Yes, he was seen through works and through the operation. Nor did he say, He who pierced you, turning aside the reproach, but, *the one who appeared to you*. *Scales fell* away, showing the sharpness of the blindness, and the undeniability of the healing.

Acts 9:20-25 ***And immediately he proclaimed Christ in the synagogues, that this is the Son of God. All who heard were astonished and said, "Is not this the man who made chaos in Jerusalem among those who called on this***

name? And has he come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" But Saul was growing more and more powerful, and stunned the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. As the days were many, the Jews plotted together to kill him. But Saul became aware of their plot. They kept watch at the gates day and night so that they might kill him. The disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a basket.

he proclaimed Christ in the synagogues. As a learned man he silenced them and would not let them speak, but proved from the Scriptures. That is, reconciling, teaching with gentleness that Jesus is the *Christ*, *the Son of God*. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

But they *plotted to kill him*; Saul, however, escaped from the *wall in a basket* through his *disciples,* and was preserved as a fugitive. Note that he was already gaining disciples, therefore he was wholly inflamed and filled with preaching, and it made him more eager to come later. For though he longed to depart from here, yet he also loved the salvation of people; therefore he often planned such things, keeping himself for the proclamation, and did not refuse to use human means when the occasion demanded. *[2 CLEMENT]*

Acts 9:26-28 ***Now when Saul came to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took hold of him, brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had boldly spoken in the name of Jesus. And he was with them going in and out of Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.***

It is worth questioning here how, on the one hand, in the Epistle to the Galatians he says that I did not go up to Jerusalem, but to Arabia and Damascus, and after three years to Jerusalem, and that he saw Peter and that he saw none of the other apostles. (Gal. 1:16-17) Yet here, on the other hand, he says that Barnabas led him to the apostles. Now when he says in the Epistle to the Galatians that he did not go up, he means that he did not go up to talk. For he says, "I did not talk with them nor did I go up to Jerusalem." If this is not what he means, it is clear that the plot in Damascus did not occur immediately after his believing, but after his return from Arabia three years later. If this is also not the meaning, then although he did not go to the apostles he tried to attach himself to the disciples, tempering himself as a teacher rather than as a disciple. But Barnabas brings him to the apostles and relates what he had seen and how bold he was. For this reason he says that he went, to go to the apostles before me; I went away; at any rate I learned nothing from them. He took this ascent so as to be therefore, that he went away into Arabia, then he came to Damascus, then to Jerusalem, then to Syria. Or if not this in that order, that again he went up to Jerusalem, then was sent to Damascus, then to Arabia, then again to Damascus, then to Caesarea. And then after fourteen years he went up again to Jerusalem, perhaps when he brought the brothers along with Barnabas. If not this, the author gives another reckoning of the time. For the historian Luke also shortens many things and gathers together many periods. But it seems to me that Barnabas was from the first a friend to him, a man of such fair and exceedingly kind character; therefore also he was called son of consolation by name; therefore he became approachable to the man. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 9:29-30 ***He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists; but they attempted to kill him. When his***

brothers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

He says "*Hellenists*" of those speaking in Greek, and very wisely. For the others, that is, the native Jews, did not even wish to see him. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 9:31 ***The churches therefore throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord, and were multiplied by the encouragement of the Holy Spirit.***

"*The churches therefore*." He is about to say that Peter went down from there; so that you may not think this a cause for alarm, he prefaced it by saying that the churches enjoyed *peace*. For when the height of the persecution was on, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem; but when there was peace, they preached also to the other places.

About Aeneas, a paralytic healed in Lydda by Peter. In which passage are the matters concerning Tabitha the hospitable woman, whom Peter raised from the dead, through prayer in Joppa.

Acts 9:32-35 ***And it came to pass that Peter, traveling through them all, also came down to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years and paralyzed; and Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all those who dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.***

Peter did not demand the man's faith, nor did he ask whether he wished to be healed; for the outward signs of his own power had

not yet been revealed. It is therefore reasonable that the man's faith was not required. Nor did they demand the lame man's. Indeed the miracle became above all a comfort to many; for the man was notable. Just as Christ, when beginning his miracles, did not require faith, so neither did these. In Jerusalem their faith was naturally first awakened, so that even when Peter came his shadow might fall upon some of them. For many miracles occurred there. Here, however, this comes first. Some of the miracles were done to draw others to them, and others for the comfort of those who believed. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 9:36-42 ***Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas. She was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. It happened in those days that she became ill and died. They washed her, and laid her in an upper room. But since Lydda was near to Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent to him, begging him not to delay coming to them. Peter rose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. Peter, putting them all out, knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." She opened her eyes; and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and lifted her up. Calling the saints and the widows, he presented her alive. This became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.***

"*named Tabitha*, and the rest." It is shown that she was therefore named after her conduct, being alert and sober like a gazelle. For many names are given with reference to character, indicating by the nickname the operation that followed. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*It happened in those days that she became ill and died*." And having *washed her*, they did all the things that are done for the dead. And then having sent for, they summoned *Peter*. They did not do this before her death, considering it unworthy to disturb the disciples for such matters and to distract them from the preaching. Wherefore he also says that he was near. For they requested this as an additional matter; for she was a disciple. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"Tabitha *was with them*." The phrase "*with them*" shows her humility, that she was present with them and ate with them as one among many. What then did Peter do? He put *them all out*, so that they might not be disturbed by tears nor be agitated. And having *knelt down he prayed*. For not always did the miracles follow immediately upon his prayer. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 9:43</u> ***And there came adequate days that he remained in Joppa with a certain Simon a tanner.***

Peter does not remain attached to any one of the notable men, but to the tanner, leading us through all things into humility, neither letting the lowly be ashamed nor the great be proud. For those who believed through the miracles desired his teaching concerning God Jesus the Christ, who was proclaimed by him. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 9.

1. ἐμπνέων is the present active participle of ἐμπνέω, meaning "breathing," "breathing in," or figuratively "inhaling" (a state of mind). It suggests being animated by, consumed with, or full of a particular spirit or emotion, famously used in Acts 9:1 to describe Saul "breathing" (inhaling/consumed by) threats and murder.

2. In Greek, κέντρα is the plural form of κέντρον, meaning goads, stings, or pricks. It traditionally refers to sharp, pointed sticks used by farmers to

guide oxen. It is famously used in the New Testament phrase "to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14), symbolizing futile resistance to divine direction.

3. Cramer's Catena attributes this quote to Ammonius the Presbyter of the third century. The canons of Paul generally refer to the 13 or 14 epistles traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul in the New Testament.

CHAPTER 10

Concerning Cornelius, what the angel said to him, and what again was said from heaven to Peter concerning the calling of the nations; in which account Peter, having been sent for, came to Cornelius. A repetition by Cornelius of those things of which the angel testified and informed him.

The catechesis[1] of Peter into Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit upon those who heard; and how the believers from the nations were baptized.

> **Acts 10:1-6a** ***There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, devout and fearing God with all his household, who did many alms for the people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God entering to him and saying to him, "Cornelius." He, looking at him and being frightened, said, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa and summon Simon who is called Peter." He was staying with a certain Simon, a tanner.***

They do not mention that both the Ethiopian and Cornelius held office, but that by their wealth and the influence surrounding them they were not hindered from living devoutly. This man therefore is not a Jew, nor under the laws, but already had anticipated our way of life. Seeing him, the eye of simple-mindedness, that his

deeds are fine but dead and yet he has no faith, sends a representative to judge the deeds, so as to crown with faith one who competes well. And he does this also for the instruction of Peter, and more for the weaker ones. *About the ninth hour*, when he had been released from care, and was in silence and devotion. For this reason the author makes the man known and revealed, so that no one might say he is lying. Through this also he indicated his rank. "From a band *called the Italian*." A band is what we now call a unit. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 10:6b-7 ***There is a house by the sea. He will speak to you about what you must do. And when the angel who had spoken to Cornelius departed, he called two of his household servants and a devout soldier who attended him.***

The apostles sought places separated from the cities, as friends of solitude and quiet. But what if another man had also happened to be named Simon? Behold, he gives a sign that he lives by the sea. He did not, however, state the reason, for fear that he weaken him, but dismissed him as being in the desire and eagerness to hear. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 10:8-10a ***And having explained everything to them, he sent them off to Joppa. But on the next day, while they were traveling, Peter went up on the roof to pray at about the sixth hour. And there was a man who was very hungry and wanted to get something to eat; and they were preparing it.***

See the humility of his spirit. For he did not say, "Call Peter to me"; for he would not summon him in the name of rank. Therefore he recounted everything so as even to persuade: so modest was the

man. Yet nothing of greatness could be conceived of a man who kept himself apart at the tannery. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 10:10b-13a ***He fell into a trance. And he sees the heavens opened, and something like a great sheet coming down upon him, bound at the four corners, and being laid upon the earth, in which were all the four-footed animals of the earth, and the beasts, and the reptiles, and the birds of the heaven. And a voice came to him.***

A trance denotes also a wonder-struck astonishment, and the soul's being led outside the senses toward spiritual things. From this it is clear that some kind of spiritual vision came to him, as it were, his body being out of the soul's ordinary state.

"*And he sees*." A supreme symbol of the whole inhabited world, that very screen. And the four principles signify the four elements. The apparent *sheet* denotes the denser world. The diverse animals are symbols of the condition of men. *[EVAGRIUS]*

Or, to speak more clearly, the Church is the sheet. The beasts within it are the nations. Therefore he beheld the Church bound by the four Gospels, in which all the peoples were contained.

Acts 10:13b-29a ***"Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything common or unclean." And the voice spoke to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This occurred three times, and immediately the vessel was taken up into heaven. While Peter was pondering within himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men sent by Cornelius, having inquired for the house of Simon, stood at the gate,***

and calling, they asked whether Simon called Peter lodged there. And while Peter was considering the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men seek you; but rise, go down, and go with them, not doubting at all, for I have sent them. So Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius and said, Behold, I am he whom you seek. What is the cause for which you have come? They said, Cornelius the centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man, well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to send for you to his house and to hear words from you. So when he had called them in, he entertained them. On the following day Peter went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the next day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and having called together his kinsmen and near friends, when Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, Stand up; I myself am also a man. Conversing with him he went in and found many gathered together, and he said to them, You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to associate with or to go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean; therefore I also came without objection when I was sent for.

The earth is the sheet, and the creatures in it are the beasts, those from the nations. And the "*kill and eat*," because those too must be admitted. And the third to happen is this, the baptism. But as Peter was in confusion, the men came conveniently, resolving the confusion. For the soul readily receives the solution. Previously it had come into confusion, just as Joseph earlier suffered restraint to be disturbed, and then the angel came. (Matt. 1:20)

"*And having called out they inquired*." Since they inquired into a humble house from below, and they asked not the neighbors. Great is the power of the Spirit in what was said, that "*for I have sent them*." When Peter went down he inquired into the reason why, so that if he needed to leave immediately he might rush, and if not, he might entertain them in the house. And that some of the brothers from *Joppa* accompanied Peter homeward, for convenience. So that he might be a witness thereafter, when Peter must give an account to the disciples, that he too had been judged by the Spirit not to be partial.

Peter exhorts that the brutal and irrational sort of people be sacrificed, so that once they are cleansed what remains may become edible. The account of piety is delivered plainly, not once the divine voice having said that what God has sanctified is not common, but three times: that we may learn by the one voice God cleansing the Father, and by the other God cleansing the Only-Begotten, and by the other the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps kneeling he had seen the vision: therefore the voice also said to him, "*Rise, Peter, kill and eat*." But it showed that what he had seen was divine by reason of his being raised into a trance of mind, and because the voice descended from there, and because on the third time it declared that it was unclean. Moreover, that they came from heaven, and were withdrawn therefore, is a great argument of purification. This, however, was done for those about whom he was afterward to tell the matter. For he himself had indeed heard, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles." (Matthew 10:5-6)

That the voice was heard a third time likewise shows the truth of the vision itself. It is clear, however, that he did not wish the utterance to be understood as concerning all foods when he says, "*I have never eaten anything common or unclean*," for oxen, goats, birds, and winged creatures would have been called common with

him, since Peter was born among the Jews. For the Jews eat flesh, and among them the eating of meats is not forbidden. Since therefore he himself spoke from the beginning, or at least until he approached the Savior, it is certainly clear that he did not pronounce universally, saying "*common and unclean*," but concerning those things which the law called common and unclean. And yet when Peter was making a discourse about those things which were common and unclean in the law, God, who had given a sign to the holy Church of Christ, judged nothing to be common to him; for all things are clean to him "which are received with thanksgiving." (1 Tim. 4:4) But although the speech concerning the calling of the Gentiles was somewhat obscure, so that they should not say that those who were uncircumcised were common or unclean, Peter's speech did not entitle people, but those things which were prohibited in the law, as has been shown. *[OF SAINT EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS, FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF THE PANARION AGAINST THE HERESIES]*

Acts 10:29b ***I therefore inquire for what reason you have summoned me.***

Peter had already heard everything from the soldiers; but he wishes first that they confess, and to make them accountable in faith. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 10:30a ***And Cornelius said: From the fourth day until this hour I had been fasting, and at the ninth hour I was praying in my house.***

It seems to him that the seasons of his life had become more exacting for him, and on certain days. For this reason he said, "*From the fourth day*." When then the angel appears to him, this is one day; and the day on which those sent from Cornelius

withdrew is one; and the day on which they came is one; and on the fourth he appeared about the third hour, after which he prayed. See then the greatness of the prayer, when he committed himself to holiness; then the angel appears to him.

Acts 10:30b-35 ***And behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing*** (a man, he says, and not an angel; therefore he was without form[2]), ***and he says, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and call for Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner by the sea. I therefore sent to you at once; and you did well to come. Now then we are all present before God to hear all that has been commanded you by the Lord. And Peter opening his mouth said, Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation the one who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.***

"*righteousness* " instead of every virtue.

Acts 10:36-38a ***The message he sent to the sons of Israel, proclaiming peace through Jesus Christ, this One is Lord of all. You yourselves know what has happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, concerning Jesus of Nazareth.***

He says these things for the sake of those present, in order to draw them also into faith. Yet he grants to the sons of Israel the exception, so that they may not think themselves cast off forever. He is, he says, *Lord of all*.

Acts 10:38b-41a ***How God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, because God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging him on a tree. This one God raised on the third day, and he granted that he should be revealed not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen beforehand by God for us.***

Being *anointed* as Jesus *with the Holy Spirit* by *God* must be understood according to the human aspect. For since he emptied himself and in like manner partook for us of blood and flesh, those things that he has by nature, he is said, as God, to receive them by reason of the human element. For he does not receive them for himself, since he is the God Word (for they were his own), but for us, as a first fruits through himself.

Acts 10:41b-42 ***Who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to bear witness that he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead.***

Therefore, he confirms Christ's resurrection by the fact that they ate with him after the resurrection. For he did not make any sign from the resurrection; for the resurrection itself was a great sign, and there was no such sign of a resurrection as eating and drinking. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 10:43 ***All the prophets testify concerning him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.***

Those who, he says, prophesied spoke concerning the forgiveness of sins; in this matter they said that these are forgiven by Jesus. Therefore also Isaiah, bringing forward his very person, says: "I am the one who wipes away your sins, and your lawless deeds." (Isa. 43:25)

> **<u>Acts 10:44-48</u>** ***While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision who had come with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had also been poured out upon the Gentiles; for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone withhold the water, preventing these people from being baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" He commanded that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.***

When they had believed that by baptism there is altogether the remission of sins, then the Spirit descended upon them. This, however, happened by God's ordaining for the great defense of Peter. Nor did the Spirit come in a common way, but they also spoke in tongues, which put those who had been companions into astonishment; because of which Peter immediately ordered them to *be baptized in the name of the Lord*. Nor did he say: Why is water needed, when the Holy Spirit has come upon them? For he knew that in the water divine signs are accomplished, namely burial and mortification, resurrection and life. Just as it is easy for us to be baptized and to emerge, so it is easy for God to bury the old man and show the new. This, however, is done on the third day, so that we may recognize that by the power of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit this is affected. Some, however,

say that the resurrection of Christ made on the third day is shown, which brings this about in us. *[SEVERIAN OF GABALA]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 10.

1. Catechesis [κατήχησις] means oral instruction, the basic Christian teaching, or the transmission of the faith, often in a systematic way. It derives from the ancient Greek κατηχέω (to resound downwards), implying learning through the spoken word. It is the process of teaching the doctrines of the Christian faith to children and adults.

2. Oecumenius appears to have added a gloss in the Scripture text, which is rare for him. This gloss is taken from the comments by Chrysostom.

CHAPTER 11

How Peter thereafter also related to the apostles each of the things that had occurred, while they were disputing against him. Then they sent Barnabas to the brothers who were in Antioch.

Acts 11:1-20a ***Now when the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard this, they rejoiced and glorified God, saying, "Then God has granted the same gift to the Gentiles also, that they should repent and live." But when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision disputed with him, saying, "You entered into the house of men who are uncircumcised, and you ate with them." But Peter began and explained it to them in order, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object like a great sheet descending, lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it came to me. Looking intently at it, I observed and saw the beasts of the earth and the wild animals and the creeping things and the birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing***

common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has cleansed, do not call common.' This happened three times, and everything was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, immediately three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brethren also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he related to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and summon Simon who is called Peter; he will speak words to you by which you and all your household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life." Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word only to Jews. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene.

Peter showed in his defense that he had by no means been the cause, but God everywhere. For he said, he himself set me in the excess of mind, he himself pointed out the sheet, and I indeed even contradicted; again the same he himself said, and I did not hear therefore. The Spirit commanded that I should join them, and having joined I did not even run on therefore. They said that God had sent, and I did not so baptize, but again God accomplished the

whole matter. God baptized, not I. For while I was yet speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon those men, and they spoke in tongues. They glorified God loudly, as do we. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

> **<u>Acts 11:20b-23</u>** ***Those who, having entered Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them. And a great number, having believed, turned to the Lord. And the report was heard in the ears of the church in Jerusalem concerning them; and they sent Barnabas to go to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with purpose of heart.***

"*to the Hellenists*." Perhaps because they did not know Hebrew, they called them Greeks. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

They then also spoke to them, *proclaiming the Lord Jesus*, and they all believed, for, he says, the *hand of the Lord was with them*; that is, they were performing signs. For it was necessary that signs be done in order that they might believe. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

> **<u>Acts 11:24-26</u>** ***That he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a considerable number were added to the Lord. Barnabas went out to Tarsus to seek Saul; and having found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a considerable number of people.***

Why do they not write to Paul, but send Barnabas? Because they did not yet know the man's excellence. This does not contradict the saying, "No one is good but God." (Mark 10:18) For it is not the same for God to be good in essence and for a man to be good.

For God exists as good in essence, being the principle and source of goods; whereas a man is not good in essence, but possesses goodness by a participation of virtue. He is not simply good, but a good man. To this also belong the expressions "a good man" (Matt. 12:35) and "Well done, good and faithful servant," (Matt. 25:21 and 23) and similar phrases. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 11:27-30 ***In those days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, named Agabus, stood up and, through the Spirit, signified that a great famine was about to come upon the whole inhabited world, which took place during the reign of Claudius. So the disciples, each according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brothers living in Judea, which they did, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.***

There is nothing contrary to this in what the Lord said, “The law and the prophets” up to John. (Matt. 2:12) For this concerns those prophets who proclaimed his coming beforehand. So that they would not think the famine occurred because of this, that Christianity had arrived, the Holy Spirit foretold it beforehand. And Christ himself also said this (see Matt. 24:7), not because it was necessary that this happen from the beginning, but because of the evils that befell the apostles. And God was patient; but when the time came, a great famine occurred, announcing the evils that would come upon the Jews. And if it was on their account, it was nevertheless fitting that even those present should cease. For it would have been better if they had prospered, since they committed their own deeds: they murdered, punished, scourged, and everywhere persecuted. Therefore the famine occurred, even if the wretched people did not understand, and Christians shared in their suffering because of this. It should be noted that the apostles also had the rank of elders. And elsewhere it is noted in

other chapters that they had the order of deacons and bishops. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

CHAPTER 12

The martyrdom of the apostle James: in which is related Peter's anxiety by Herod; and how an angel by divine command freed him from his chains: and when Peter had appeared to the brethren by night, he departed secretly: in which is also recounted the vengeance upon the guards and consequently the wretched and bitter destruction of the wicked Herod.

Acts 12:1 ***At the same time King Herod laid hands on certain members of the church to afflict them.***

That period he says was under Claudius Caesar. Gaius, emperor of the Romans, established Agrippa as king of Judea, *Herod* being banished to Lugdunum in Gaul on account of the disgracefulness of his life, together with his wife Herodias. This is the one who reigned at the time of the Lord's passion, as Josephus writes in the eighteenth book of the Antiquities[1] of History, and Eusebius[2] in the second book of Ecclesiastical History. Therefore there is a discrepancy of the name in this passage, that Herod is put for Agrippa, and it happened by the writer's slip, as is likely, a scribal error, or was expressed by way of he having two names, since both the time and the actions point to Agrippa under the emperor Claudius, who became emperor after Gaius. *[EUSEBIUS]*

Acts 12:2-4a ***He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. It was during the days of***

Unleavened Bread. So when he had seized him, he put him in prison.

So that no one may say that 'for this reason they boldly and without fear rush into death, since God is snatching them away,' therefore He also allows the leaders to be killed, persuading those who kill them that even these things do not separate them and hinder them. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 12:4b-8a</u> ***He was handed over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. Peter, therefore, was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was being made by the church to God. When Herod was about to bring him forward, on that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards stood at the gate guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by, and a light shone in the cell; striking Peter on the side he awakened him, saying, "Rise quickly." And the chains fell from his hands. The angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." He did so. And the angel said to him.***

"*four squads of four*." That is, the total number sixteen; for four times four makes sixteen. Perhaps at each watch, that is, in the third watch, there were four guards. There are four guards called a tri-hour watch, as the twelve hours of the whole night being four watches; in each of which, with four soldiers guarding, all together make the number sixteen. Peter was neither in agony nor in fear, but slept, having cast everything upon the Lord. He says that it *shone* so that they could both see and hear Peter and not think it a vision. The phrase "*quickly* [ἐν τάχει]" does not mean making a noise, but persuading not to delay. Observe the Jews in the days of Unleavened Bread doing such things. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 12:8b-11</u> ***Put on your garment and follow me. And going out he followed, and did not know that what was happening was true through the angel, but thought he was seeing a vision. And having passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city, which opened of its own accord for them; and going out they went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. And Peter, being inwardly moved, said, Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.***

The Lord having said to the disciples, "Do not acquire gold nor silver, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a belt, nor a staff," (Matt. 10:9-10, Mark 6:8, Luke 9:3) how did Peter act contrary to the command, having garments and a belt and sandals? Moreover, whenever Paul gives a charge writing to Timothy, "Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, bring when you come," (2 Tim. 4:13) behold he had a cloak, and one could not say that he had not another which he wore. Did he then disobey Christ? What then is the matter? Those commands were for a time, and not for always. And that this is true the evangelist Luke bears witness. For he says that Christ spoke to the disciples: "When I sent you without moneybag, and pouch, and belt, and sandals, did you lack anything?" (Luke 22:35) They say to him, "No." He says to them: So then acquire it. But for what purpose did he command this at that time? Wishing to show his power. If then Paul needed to have one tunic, if he needed to be washed, ought he to have been kept at home naked, or to go about naked and behave shamefully when necessity required? It was therefore not necessary that Paul, while accomplishing so many exploits and traveling the inhabited world, remain at home lacking in clothing, and be hindered by such matters. But what if a severe cold set in, and it rained on him or

froze him? How could the tunic he wore have been dried? Or should he again have sat naked? And what if the cold contracted his body, it was necessary that he melt and not speak? And what could be more grievous than this? For their bodies were not made of diamonds. What then? Must he be destroyed? By no means. This, however, as has been said, he ordered at that time, wishing to show his power, that they would lack none of the necessities. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 12:12-15a ***Realizing this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was called Mark, where many were gathered and praying. When he knocked at the gate of the courtyard, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, "You are out of your mind." She insisted that it was so.***

What does "*Realizing this* [συνιδών]" mean? That one must not merely depart, but repay the benefactor. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*who was called Mark*." In order to show that he does not mean John, who was always with them, he names his *mother* and gives his distinguishing nickname, for he says, "*who was called Mark*." This man was the same who wrote the Gospel according to Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, concerning whom Paul writes to Timothy: "Take Mark and bring him with you when you come, for he is useful to me for ministry." (2 Tim. 4:11)

Acts 12:15b-20 ***They said, "It is his angel." But Peter continued knocking; and when they opened, they saw him and were astonished. He motioned to them with his hand***

to be silent and related to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison, and said, "Tell this to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place. When day came there was no small disturbance among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. Herod sought him and, not finding him, questioned the guards and ordered them to be executed; then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. He was angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians; they came together with one accord to him, and after persuading Blastus the king's supervisor, who were seeking peace from the king's chamber because their royal provision was being maintained by the king's supply.

"*It is his angel*." From this it is clear that each one of us has an angel. But they expected this from the time. For he says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matt. 18:20) Where Christ is, there must be angels as well, and all the powers.

"And Peter, *departed and went to another place*." For he was not testing God. It would, however, have been possible for God at the same time to snatch away the guards. But if this were so, it would have been thought an escape. For rather it grieved him to be mocked, just like the time that his grandfather was made to look ridiculous by the magi. (see Matt. 2:16) [Why, then, are flatterers not also punished? Both were worthy of punishment. But since there is no time for judgment, the most responsible is punished.] *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 12:21-25</u> ***On a fixed day Herod, dressed in royal garments and seated upon the judgment seat, addressed them. The people cried out, "The voice of a god, and not of a man." Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him***

because he did not give glory to God; and being consumed with worms he died. But the word of God continued to grow and multiply. Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem, having completed their ministry, and they took with them John who is called Mark.

"*The people cried out*." And what of this, if those men had cried out? That he accepted the shout, thinking himself worthy of flattery. But if this man, having heard that the voice was of a god and not of a man, and yet saying nothing, endured such treatment, much more would Christ, if he were not God, since he continually said that these sayings were not his, and that angels served him. (see Jn. 7) At that time, in the third year of Agrippa's reign, there was present in Caesarea the tower formerly called Straton's Tower. He took part there in the procession for the honor of the Caesar, understanding it to be a kind of festival. On the second day of the processions, having put on a costume made entirely of silver, as if it were a marvelous fabric, he came to the theater at the beginning of the day; there, with the first strikes of the sun's rays, the silver, brilliantly illuminated, shone forth wondrously, presenting something marble-like, and dreadful to those who gazed upon it. *[EUSEBIUS]*

Immediately the flatterers cried out from different places, as if addressing a god and declaring him to be caring. Although until now we feared him as a man, from this point we confess him superior to nature. The king, however, did not rebuke them, nor did he turn away from impious flattery. After a little, having raised his silent one, and seeing hanging over his own head by a certain rope, he at once perceived that this messenger was evil and never had been among the good. He therefore felt anguish at heart, and a sudden pain seized his bowels, beginning with violence. Then, springing toward his friends, he said, "O God with you, I am already hastening to destroy my life, since immediately Fortune

exposes the voices I have just now uttered as false; called immortal by you, I now lead myself to die." *[EUSEBIUS]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 12.

1. Josephus, Antiquities 18.7.2

2. Eusebius, Church History 2.4

CHAPTER 13

Acts 13:1 ***There were some in Antioch in the church who were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who was a companion of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.***

Behold the character of each one, and not the upbringing from childhood saves. For see what company *Manaen* kept, who was esteemed a companion of prophecy. *[AMMONIUS]*

The mission of Barnabas and Paul by the Holy Spirit to Cyprus, and what they accomplished in the name of Christ with Elymas the magician.

Acts 13:2-8 ***While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, after fasting and praying, and laying on their hands, they sent them off. These, having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus; and being together in Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also***

had John as their attendant. As they passed through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain Jewish false prophet and magician whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

What does "*they were worshiping*" mean? That is, of those preaching.

"*Set apart for me for the work*." That is, to a mission. By whom, then, is he ordained? By Lucius and Manaen, but more by the Spirit. He is ordained so as to preach with authority. In *Seleucia* they do not make any difficulty, knowing that from the neighboring city they would reap great benefit.

Acts 13:9-13a ***But Saul, who is also Paul, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and having fixed his gaze upon him, said: O full of all deceit and all fraud, son of the Devil, enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. Immediately there fell upon him a mist and darkness, and he went about seeking leaders by the hand. Then when the deputy saw what had happened, he believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. And those around Saul, having been taken up from Paphos, came to Perga of Pamphylia.***

"*Saul, who is also Paul*." So that Paul might not seem lesser than the other apostles in this respect, God changed his name, and calling Saul Paul, and whatever preeminence the chief of the

disciples possessed, he also obtained, and received a position of greater familiarity. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Therefore to show that Paul's words to Elymas the sorcerer were not spoken in anger, he anticipated and said, "*filled with the Holy Spirit*." For these words were not of punishment but of conversion. If they had been disciplinary, he would have made him blind forever; now, however, not that, but for a time, that he might convince the proconsul. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

For the phrase "*for a time*," giving a limit to the sentence, means that the way in which he received the light is to be altered for the better; for he who had been led to the worse was now to be brought to this as well. Accordingly it was not punishment but healing.

<u>Acts 13:13b-15</u> ***But John, having withdrawn from them, returned to Jerusalem. They, having passed through Perga, came to Antioch in Pisidia, and when they entered the synagogue on the day of the Sabbath they took their seats. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the chief officers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men, brethren, if there is any word of encouragement from you for the people, speak."***

"*John, having withdrawn*." This is John, also called Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, who also wrote the Gospel according to Mark and was a disciple of Peter the chief, of whom he says in the Epistle: "Mark my son greets you." (1 Peter 5:13) Therefore this man, since the journey concerning Paul was to be prolonged, withdrew from them, although being a servant, because he would not undergo the dangers. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Paul's flourishing, teaching and leading to Christ both from the Law and then from the Prophets, historical and evangelical, which is both collected and argumentative. On the translation of the preaching to the Gentiles, and their persecution there and departure at Iconium.

Acts 13:16-19a ***Then Paul stood up and, waving his hand, said: "Men of Israel, and those who fear God, listen. The God of this people chose our fathers, and raised up the people while they sojourned in the land of Egypt. And with a mighty arm he brought them out from it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. And he subdued seven nations in the land of Canaan."***

Here Paul first preaches in Antioch of Pisidia. He would enter the synagogues in the appearance of a Jew so as not to be driven away, and therefore everything succeeded. "*Seven nations*:" the Hittites, the Gergaeans, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (see Deut. 7:1)

Acts 13:19b-24 ***He gave them their land as an inheritance. And after this, for about four hundred and fifty years, he appointed judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. From there they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years old. And having removed him he raised up for them David as king, of whom he also testified: "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all my will." From this man God, according to his promise, brought forth for Israel a Savior, Jesus, heralded by John.***

"*I have found David*," and the following. It should be noted that nowhere are these words quoted word for word in the book of Kings, but they were spoken prophetically by Samuel to Saul, therefore: "And now your kingdom shall not continue; and the Lord will seek for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord

will appoint him ruler over His people, because you did not keep what the Lord commanded you." (1 Sam. 13:13) And from this passage Paul therefore spoke, "*I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all my will*." "Before his coming: a baptism of repentance to Israel." He says, "He came in the flesh." [THEODORET ON 1 KINGS]

<u>Acts 13:25-29</u> ***When John had completed his course, he said: Whom do you suppose me to be? I am not he; behold, there comes after me one whose sandal-straps I am not worthy to untie. "Men, brothers, sons of the race of Abraham, and all among you who fear God, to you has been sent this message of salvation. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, having not known him, and having judged the sayings of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them; and finding no cause of death, they asked Pilate that he be put to death. And when they had accomplished all that was written concerning him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.***

John testifies, not simply, but bringing all glory upon him, he himself rejects it. For it is not equal for honor to be repelled from one who gives nothing and from many who grant it. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

And the phrase, "*to you has been sent this message*," shows the Jewish courtesy; and he mentions *Pilate*, so that they are accused more heavily as having handed him over to a foreigner. And the phrase, "*they asked*," he says, received favor, as if he were unwilling; which Peter also states more clearly: judging him to be released. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 13:30-33a</u> ***But God raised him from the dead, and he was seen for many days by those who had accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this to their children for us.***

Nothing is inappropriate in saying that Jesus was *raised* by *God*. For if Jesus is none other than the Word who became flesh, (see Jn. 1:1-14) and this Word is the power of the Father through whom he enacts all things, (see 1 Cor. 8:6) according to "Christ is the power of God," (1 Cor. 1:24) he will be understood to have raised himself, although being said to have been raised by the Father, insofar as the timeless origin and cause are referred to all things. For he himself also says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (Jn. 2:19) [SEVERUS THE ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH FROM THE LETTER TO MARON]

<u>Acts 13:33b</u> ***Raising Jesus, as is also written in the first Psalm: You are my Son; today I have begotten you.***

Since the name *Jesus* is applied to the man and some therefore misunderstand, he anticipated and said that the Word was placed in a tomb, so that no one might suppose the Word to have been spoken of as incorporeal; again he calls him *Jesus*, giving no separation anywhere to the Word who was made flesh after the union, closing the mouths of the impious everywhere. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*You are my Son*." These words from the psalm suitably belong to the incarnation of Christ, which had a temporal arrival. For "*Today*" and "Tomorrow" are representative of days. But he, as the Word, is begotten of the Father timelessly. *[HESYCHIUS OF JERUSALEM]*

Acts 13:34-37 ***But that he raised him from the dead, never again to return to corruption, he has said therefore, that I will give you the faithful things of David. Therefore also in another place he says: You will not allow your holy one to see corruption. For David, having served in his own generation, fell asleep according to the will of God, and was added to his fathers, and saw corruption. But the one whom God raised did not see corruption."***

Note, then, that it is not necessary to say that the body of our Savior and God Jesus Christ, after the resurrection, is passible, that is, susceptible to suffering, nor imperishable and immortal before the resurrection. For the incorruption according to sinlessness was noticeably present from that very time of the Incarnation. [SEVERUS THE HOLY ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIOCH FROM THE EPISTLE ADDRESSED TO TIMOTHY, ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA]

Acts 13:38-39 ***Let it therefore be known to you, brothers, that through this the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to us, and from all those things by which you were not able to be justified under the law of Moses, in this one everyone who believes is justified.***

Why did he not produce testimony by which they would have been persuaded that the forgiveness of sins is affected through him? That this was what was being sought, namely to show first that he had risen. This being admitted, the other is indisputable. For Israel was indeed of great astonishment, called the first-born son, for fear that Egypt be destroyed, handed over to the enemies, the Babylonians, by sword and captivity and servitude. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 13:40-42 ***See that what has been spoken may not come upon you; among the prophets. Behold, you who are despised, and marvel, and be annihilated, for a work I am doing in your days, which you will not believe if someone reports it to you. And when they had gone out of the synagogue of the Jews, they entreated the Gentiles during the intervening Sabbath to have the words spoken to them.***

The prophecy of the prophet Habakkuk denouncing unrighteous judgment and the excessive forbearance of God, and saying: Why have You shown me toil and trouble? For judgment has arisen against me, and the righteous judge takes, and the wicked oppresses the just, and judgment is not executed to the end; (Hab. 1:3-4) God answers, announcing beforehand the calamities to those who do wrong. He says, moreover, that the things which will happen to them are wondrous. These things, he says, are so many and so great in magnitude that one would even doubt if someone should foretell them to you.

Acts 13:43-49 ***And those Gentiles who honored them with Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking alongside them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God, then, when the Sabbath was coming, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. And they contradicted the things spoken on behalf of Paul, opposing and blaspheming. But Paul and Barnabas, having spoken with boldness, said: It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. But since you reject it, and do not deem yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. For therefore the Lord commanded us: I have appointed you to be a light***

for the nations, to bring you to salvation to the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard, they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and believed as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the word of the Lord was spread throughout the whole region.

Respecting here and going forward those who are fervent and passionate in the worship surrounding it, he calls them rather zealots than the others. For such persons accepted the faith in Christ sooner than others, being able to perceive its superiority and greatness, and not from human passion, but from a regard for truth and a love of devotion and the reverence they previously held, becoming zealots for that. And again such persons were more incited and enraged against the disciples and the preaching, as showing greater zeal for their own worship than the others. Or he calls proselytes those who worship privately. And speaking publicly and saying: "Men of Israel and you who fear God," (Acts 13:16) he called the proselytes those who fear God, praising some as belonging to the nation and naming them Israelites, and, because he could not say that of others, equating them with respect to religion. He did not think that what is said was unseemly of modesty and shame, "*Do not esteem yourselves worthy*," for this reason he first said, "*But since you reject it*," and then, "*we turn to the Gentiles*." He did not say, "We leave you," but, as he says, "If possible," and here again to turn. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

He did not think that what is said was unseemly of modesty and shame, that you judged yourselves unworthy; therefore he prefaced, You reject that: and then he adds: *We turn to the Gentiles*. But he did not say: We abandon you, but that it might be possible that we should again, he says, be turned towards you here. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 13:50-52 ***But the Jews stirred up the respectable women and the leading men of the city and incited persecution against Paul and Barnabas; and they expelled them from their territory. Then they shook the dust off their feet against them and went to Iconium. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.***

They fulfill what the Lord commanded them, saying: "If anyone does not receive you, shake off the dust from your feet." (Matt. 10:14, Mark 6:11, and Luke 9:5) But these not only did not receive them, but even drove them out of their borders, which is worse. For the Lord does not wish his disciples to have even the dust on their feet from the land of wicked people, thereby showing that they had gained nothing from the disobedient. The dust is a token of the toil which they endured on their behalf. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

CHAPTER 14

As in Iconium, after preaching Christ and many having believed, the apostles were persecuted.

Acts 14:1-6 ***Now when they entered Iconium, they went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers. So they remained there a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done through their hands. But the city was divided, some siding with the Jews and others with the apostles. When there was a violent attempt by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat and stone them, they learned of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe,***

and the surrounding region, where they continued to proclaim the good news.

"*and fled*." It should be noted here that we ought not to throw ourselves into danger, but if necessary, to flee for the time being, since the leaders of the church have done this, as if deliberately wishing to extend the proclamation, and to increase it rather through persecutions. *[CYRIL ON THE 12 MINOR PROPHETS]*

Concerning the man born lame at Lystra who was healed by the apostles; because of this they were thought to be gods, and were believed to be mad by the locals; and thereupon Paul was later stoned by the Jewish townspeople.

Acts 14:7-21 ***And there was a man at Lystra who was lame in his feet, born crippled from his mother's womb, who had never walked. He heard Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began to walk. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices in the Lycaonian language, saying, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." They called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and with the crowds was about to offer sacrifice. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out among the people, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, who in past generations allowed all the nations***

to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." And with these words they barely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them. Then Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds and stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city; and on the next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. And having preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

"*they tore their clothes*." It is a custom among the Jews, when slanders are uttered against God, to tear their clothes. And indeed Caiaphas, when the Christ was called the Son of God, tore his robe, crying out and saying that he had blasphemed. (see Matt. 26:65) The divine disciples Barnabas and Paul likewise did this, being considered gods there, turning away from what was happening by an inclination of soul, and making signs of mourning. For it was truly mourning, if they were about to be considered gods and to introduce idolatry, which they had come to abolish. *[AMMONIUS]*

CHAPTER 15

That it is not necessary for those from the Gentiles who have believed to be circumcised, a decree and judgment of the apostles; in which is

the apostolic instruction to the Gentiles concerning what must be observed. Paul's rebuttal to Barnabas regarding Mark.

<u>Acts 15:1-5</u> ***And some who had come down from Judea were teaching the brothers, that "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." When therefore a disagreement and much debate arose between Paul and Barnabas and them, it was decided that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of them, should go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question. The ones therefore who had been sent on ahead by the church passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and they brought great joy to all the brothers. When they arrived in Jerusalem they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and related how many things God had done with them. But some from the sect of the believing Pharisees rose up, saying that it was necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.***

How in the Epistle to the Galatians he says, "I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, nor did I entrust the Gospel to them or preach it among the Gentiles"; (Gal. 1:16-17) and yet here he says that *Paul and Barnabas* were appointed to go up to *Jerusalem to the apostles and elders*? And we say that, first, he did not himself go up, but was sent by others. Secondly, that he did not arrive as one being instructed, but persuading others. For he from the beginning held this opinion, which the apostles afterwards confirmed, *that it was not necessary to be circumcised*. But since at first he did not seem to them to be trustworthy, and they gave heed to those in Jerusalem, he went up, not so much to be more persuaded himself as to persuade the objectors that even those in Jerusalem agreed with these things. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

—[1] Not those faithful from the Gentiles, but those from the Jews demanded that the faithful be circumcised, and that they perform other fleshly things of the law; whom, wishing to boast in their own peculiar circumcision, the disciples did not receive, although they themselves were of the circumcision; for they sought not their own, but the common good and salvation of the world. *[AMMONIUS]*

> **Acts 15:6-9** ***Then the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. After much discussion, Peter stood up and said to them: "Brothers, you know that from ancient days God chose to make his message for the Gentiles heard through me, so that they might listen and believe. And God, who knows the hearts, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."***

Perhaps those who accused him earlier regarding Cornelius were present, and having entered with him, therefore they produce them as witnesses. But what is meant by "*God chose to make* "? That is, choosing among us while we are present in Palestine. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*and he made no distinction*," he says, "*between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith*," that is, having affected a cleansing of the sins coming from their hearts. And this cleansing seemed like circumcision, and instead of circumcision in the flesh is given circumcision in the Spirit, which cleanses the hidden things by faith toward Christ. That physical circumcision is not of benefit is shown from the fact that it was given to the male alone. But in Christ Jesus, by true faith, "there is neither male nor female, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither Greek nor Barbarian, but we are all one." (Gal. 3:28) *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 15:10-12 ***Now therefore why do you test God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved in the same manner as they. And the whole multitude became silent, and they were hearing Barnabas and Paul relating what signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. And after they had ceased speaking.***

"*why do you test God*? That is, why do you disbelieve God, as if what he says is not sufficient to save those who come to Him by faith? [2]It should be noted that the difficult-to-accomplish precepts of the flesh need not be imposed on anyone, such as extreme fasting, or celibacy, or silence, unless someone prescribes these things for himself. For although they are difficult, they are not impossible, and yet they have been practiced by many. *[AMMONIUS]*

"*But through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved*." Just as formerly the law preserved those who observed the things declared in it, so now grace, without the guardianship of the law, saves through faith. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 15:13 ***James answered, saying, "Men, brothers, listen to me.***

This James, appointed by the Lord as bishop of the Jerusalem church, was the son of Joseph the carpenter, and a brother according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. From youth he was wise, and the message of the prophets is confirmed by both ancient and recent events. For he had no need to display any work, as Peter and, indeed, Paul did. It is well managed through those things that events not destined to delay for the people of Jerusalem come to

pass. But this one who taught them was not to be held responsible, nor indeed to be torn away from his conviction.

Acts 15:14 ***Simeon explained how first God visited to take from among the nations a people for his name.***

Some say that this Simeon is the one who prophesied in Luke: "Now you may dismiss your servant, Lord." (Luke 2:29)

Acts 15:15-21 ***And the words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written: After these things I will return and will rebuild the fallen tent of David, and I will rebuild its ruined places, and will raise it up, so that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the nations on whom my name has been called may do so, says the Lord who accomplishes all these things. All his works are known to God from eternity. Therefore I judge that they who turn to God from the Gentiles should not be troubled, but should be sent to abstain from the defilements of idols, and from fornication, and from strangled things, and from blood. For Moses has, from ancient generations, those who proclaim him in every city in the synagogues reading him every Sabbath.***

The Jews understood this to refer to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after the exile. But this is not true, for that temple was destroyed many times thereafter; the prophecy promises an everlasting rebuilding. Those who say it refers to Zerubbabel have not rightly understood, as if he were descended from the line of David, and this too is not true. For Zerubbabel ruled only a short time and then met the term of death. The prophecy contains a promise of eternal blessings and of the knowledge of God by all the nations, which is not fulfilled by those who lived under

Zerubbabel. It is therefore plain that we must interpret this as spoken concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. For our Lord, being descended according to the flesh from David, fulfilled the promise made to David. "For the Word became flesh," (Jn. 1:14) and dwelt among us, having taken up the dwelling from David. It is therefore fitting that David's prophetic word says the dwelling will be rebuilt, and not for a short time, but for all the days of the age; and it promises to the nations the gift of knowledge of God, that is, those from the nations who have turned to Christ and have been called by the name of Christ. Others say that this was said concerning his resurrection from the dead. For when the tent that had fallen into death, that is, the flesh raised from the earth by God and Father, then the whole human form was restored to its original shape, and all our things that had fallen down were raised to a new appearance; for we were raised with Christ. Death indeed demolished all the tents. But God and the Father rebuilt in Christ. For it was not possible for our nature to be raised otherwise than by the hand of Him who shaped its beginning reaching down and fashioning it anew through regeneration by water and Spirit. (see Jn. 3:5) For it had truly fallen, a ruin incurable, and in need of that mighty hand. And he says that this need of ours will not last a short time, but for the days of an age [αἰῶνος[3]]. For the good of incorruption is enduring in us. Then, he says, even the remnant of men after those who have believed out of Israel will have truly and by nature known God, having departed from ancient error. And he says that all the nations will be called, and upon them will be my name, upon whom it was called from the beginning, "For whom he foreknew, he also predestined," he says. (Rom. 8:29)

<u>Acts 15:22-36</u> ***Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas who was called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men***

among the brothers, writing by their hands therefore: The apostles and the elders and the brothers, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law," to whom we gave no such commandment, it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from sexual immorality; from which if you keep yourselves, you will do well. Farewell. So those who were sent off returned to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude, they delivered the letter; and when they had read it, they rejoiced at the support. Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them. And after they had spent some time, they were dismissed with peace by the brethren to the apostles. And it seemed good to Silas to remain there. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are."

"*to choose men from among them to send*." They decided that it should not serve merely to have the letter present, for fear that they say that they had seized one thing for another by speaking falsely,

but so that the matter might also become more credible, they send those from among them, that Barnabas and Paul may be beyond suspicion. And so that it may not seem to be slander that Paul and Barnabas were the ones sent, they entrust them. They say that men *who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*It seemed good*," they say, "*to the Holy Spirit and to us*." For nowhere did Christ discuss these matters; rather they speak of them from the law. Therefore, for fear that it seem to be of human origin, they ascribe it to the Holy Spirit. And so that they may be instructed that they too accept them even though being circumcised, they add, "*to us to*." For they could indeed have shown these things without written words, but because of the unsuspecting, and with the intention that these matters become a written ordinance, they write the letter. Again, so that they may be persuaded by the law, and after forbidding them to do these four things, they accepted the remaining customs to themselves. What are these? "*To abstain*," they say, "*from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality*." By the command to abstain from what is strangled, they forbid murder. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 15:37-38</u> ***Barnabas, however, decided to take with him John who was called Mark. But Paul insisted that the one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work should not be taken along.***

John, called Mark, was accompanying them on the evangelic journey, from Palestine as far as Pamphylia. Then, finding the apostles' route too strenuous, and his spirit unbending toward those engaged in struggles, Mark, being a man given to exhaustion and not suited to so laborious a road and to the challenges and dangers that arise in each city, withdrawing from the apostles'

route, returned to Palestine, not denying Christ, but renouncing the long and heavy road. Paul and Barnabas, full of the fruits of devotion, and preaching to the church in Jerusalem, in no way resolved to forbid hardships. When, then, all the nations were praising Paul and Barnabas for their accomplishments, Mark, being distressed, suffered a blow to his spirit, and perhaps thought within himself, saying, If I were a sharer in the sufferings, I would now be a sharer also in the praises; and he determined to accompany the apostles in their preaching. Barnabas therefore received him after his repentance, *but Paul insisted* and said, One who did not accompany us in the Lord's *work should not be taken along*. The contention, then, was one of righteousness, not of passion. For Paul sought what was just, and Barnabas what was compassionate. Mark accordingly followed Barnabas, striving and running, while Paul in the churches commanded that Mark be not accepted, not so that he might grieve him, but that he might make him more earnest. But when Paul saw that Mark had anticipated the urgency and had made his defense through others, he began to praise him and said, "Mark, Barnabas's nephew, sends his greetings; concerning whom you received instructions, if he comes, welcome him."(Col. 4:10)[4] *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 15:39-41</u> ***A sharp disagreement arose, so that they separated from one another; Barnabas took Mark and sailed off to Cyprus. But Paul, having chosen Silas, departed, having been commended to the grace of God by the brothers. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.***

"*A sharp disagreement*," he said, "*arose*," nor a love of conflict. Yet the *sharp disagreement* was such that it separated them from one another; and with the highest righteousness, which each

considered to be beneficial, he later confirmed this by an act of sharing toward him. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

It seems reasonable that the separation arose from mutual understanding, and to say to one another that "Since I wish it and you do not, so that we do not quarrel, let us divide the regions." Therefore they entirely yielded to one another in this. For Barnabas wished that Paul should remain, and therefore he departed. Yet we also find this among the prophets: different dispositions and different temperaments, as Elijah is severe, Moses gentle, so likewise here Paul is the more intense of the two compared to Barnabas. This battle was very beneficial to Mark. For it turned back Paul's harshness, and made Barnabas kind so that he would no longer be abandoned. Therefore they fight, but in the end increase is accomplished. For seeing Paul lifted up to depart, he became very afraid and condemned himself, and seeing Barnabas therefore opposing him, he would very much love him. And the student was corrected through the struggle of the teachers, so that he kept far from being scandalized. For when he saw himself therefore cast out because of his idleness by Paul, he hurried with zeal on the second course to cover up his former annoyance, greatly benefited by Paul's correctness. What then? Did the enemies withdraw? By no means! That there was not hostility toward the apostles is shown everywhere afterward by Barnabas enjoying many praises from Paul in his letters. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 15.

1. According to Cramer's Catena, this is an excerpt from Ammonius of Alexandria.

2. Ammonius of Alexandria.

3. The phrase "εἰς ἡμέρας αἰῶνος" is a Koine Greek expression typically translated as "unto the days of the age" or more poetically as "forevermore".

4. This parting of the ways between Paul, Barnabas, and Mark was beautifully written about in the Acts of Barnabas, which is an apocryphal writing that claims to have been written by Mark himself. According to Mark in this writing, Paul misunderstood the situation.

CHAPTER 16

On the catechesis of Timothy, and on Paul's coming into Macedonia by revelation; in which concerning the faith and salvation of a certain woman Lydia; concerning the healing of a girl possessed by the spirit of Python, through whom the masters laid hands on Paul. Concerning the earthquake and miracle that occurred there, and how the jailer, having believed in that same night, was immediately baptized, being perfectly at ease, because, having been summoned, the apostles then came out of the prison.

Acts 16:1-5 ***He went on to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, there was a disciple there named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek; who was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul desired him to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they passed through the cities they were delivering to them to observe the doctrines which had been decided by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. The churches therefore were strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.***

He called the abstaining of the sacrifices "*doctrine*s," from sexual immorality and from blood, and from what is strangled; which he

sees as a condition for canonical life[1]. For these order a temperate life and are fitting for rational people.

Acts 16:6-8a ***Having passed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, being forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, when they came to Mysia they attempted to travel into Bithynia, and the Spirit did not allow them. Having passed by Mysia, they went down to Troas.***

In *Asia* and *Bithynia the Spirit* forbids the apostles *to speak the word*, foreknowing that the heresy of those who fight against the spirits will prevail.

Acts 16:8b ***And a vision appeared to Paul during the night. A certain man of Macedonia stood, urging him and saying, "Cross over into Macedonia and help us."***

No longer through an angel as with Philip or Cornelius, but through *a vision* it appears to Paul more humanly. For there persuasion is easy, more human; there, however, great force, more divine. Since he was only about to preach, it appears to him as a dream for this purpose. But he did not presume to preach; for by this the Holy Spirit reveals. For, he says, when they came, they attempted to go through Mysia and Bithynia, and the Spirit did not allow them. For the Spirit did not work even the easy things, but *a vision* sufficed. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 16:9-12 ***When he saw the vision, we immediately sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. So, having set sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace,***

and on the next day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony; and we remained in that city for some days.

Notably, Luke was with Paul in those cities, as appears from these words in which he includes himself at the same time, saying: *We sought*, we came by a straight course, and other similar things. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 16:13-15 ***On the day of the Sabbath we went outside the city, beside a river where it was customary to pray; and, sitting down, we spoke to the women who had gathered. A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened. The Lord opened her heart to attend to what was said by Paul. When she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, enter into my house and stay." And she compelled us.***

Not only where the synagogue was, but also outside they prayed, as if separating some particular place for this purpose, namely the Jews being excessively given to bodily things. Or rather, perhaps there was no synagogue there because of the thin population; beside the river outside the city the supposedly pious used to meet secretly. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

He calls Neapolis the present Christopolis[2].

Acts 16:16-25 ***Now as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of foretelling met us, who brought her masters much gain by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, crying out and saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God,***

who proclaim to us the way of salvation." And she did this for many days. But Paul, being greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out of her that very hour. But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And bringing them to the magistrates they said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans." Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. After they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received such a command, he thrust them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the wood. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and the chains were heard.

Python is said to be a woman who used to sit upon the tripod of Apollo with its legs spread, then in this way a corrupt spirit from below entering her and passing through her genital parts would fill the woman with madness, and with her hair unbound would set her to rave beneath this, and force foam from her mouth, and therefore in the state of wickedness, utter the words of madness. But why did this demon also speak these things? It wished to make its testimony believable concerning the future. For if Paul had accepted that, he would certainly have deceived many even of the believers, as though received by him. Therefore he permits those things to be said which act against him in order to establish his own; and by the relinquishing of his own he makes use of it for the ruin of others. Accordingly Paul at first did not indeed admit,

but despised, unwilling to rashly rush forward to the standards. But when he persisted in doing this, and had made the matter his own, then he ordered him to go out. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Paul says, that is, stirred up and distressed, having noticed even by her face that she spoke the truth, ordered the demon to come out of her: teaching us that we should not accept demons under the ploy of bearing testimony to the truth, but should shut off every path of deceit from them, and close our ears to all that belongs to them. *[SEVERUS]*

Acts 16:26 ***And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and the chains of all were loosed.***

An *earthquake* struck so *great* that it awakened the prison guard; indeed *the doors were opened*, so that he might marvel at what had happened and believe. For these things were not done for display, but for salvation. Were not these seen before by those who were bound? For otherwise certainly all would have fled.

Acts 16:27-36 ***The jailer, becoming wise and seeing the prison doors open, having taken up a sword was about to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he asked for light and sprang in, and, becoming trembling, fell down before Paul and Silas; and leading them out he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them in that hour of the night and***

washed their wounds, and he himself was baptized, and all his household immediately. And having brought them up into his house, he set food before them, and rejoiced, having believed in God with his whole household. But when it was day, the magistrates sent the jailers, saying, "Release those men." The jailer reported these words to Paul, that the magistrates had sent to have you released. Now therefore go in peace.

"*The jailer, becoming wise*." This is Stephanus, whom Paul mentions in his First Letter to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 1:16)

Acts 16:37-40 ***But Paul said to them, "Having beaten us publicly without trial, being Romans, they have taken us into custody, and now they secretly cast us out? For no; but let them come themselves and bring us out." The rod-bearers reported these words to the generals. And they were afraid, having heard that they were Romans. And coming, they entreated them; and after leading them out they asked them to depart from the city. And when they had come out of the prison they entered into Lydia, and having seen the brothers they exhorted them and went away.***

"*They beat us publicly*." He shows a twofold protest when he says: Therefore *they beat us publicly,* etc., because both the Romans and the cause being proclaimed and the public manner. For he often frames human reasons with indulgence, for fear that he appear dismissed as one condemned by judgment, or as one who had sinned, and for fear that the matter be ascribed to their favor. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Knowing also that it is right to be subject to princes and powers, he called himself a Roman. For perhaps the emperor of the

Romans held all the land, even Judea. For they themselves paid tribute to Caesar: not adding to the Roman principality and dominion, as other Jews, misleading themselves, who said that God alone was the true King and not a man; yet in fact as offshoots they were subject and paid tribute: denying the name indeed, but in fact subject; whom even Vespasian attacked as if not subject. *[AMMONIUS]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 16.

1. Κανονικῆς ζωῆς is a Greek phrase that translates to "canonical life" or "regular/ordered life." It is most frequently used in theological, ecclesiastical, or historical contexts, particularly within the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

2. Ancient Neapolis, famously known as the first European landing place of the Apostle Paul, was later renamed Christoupolis (or Christopolis, meaning "City of Christ") during the Early Middle Ages.

CHAPTER 17

Concerning a disturbance that arose in Thessalonica because of a proclamation, and Paul's flight to Berea, and from there to Athens.

Acts 17:1-3 ***Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews; as was his custom, Paul entered to them, and for three Sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead; and that Jesus is the Christ, whom I proclaim to you.***

Since these men opposed the miracles, alleging that Paul and Silas were like deceivers and tricksters, he here appeals to the Scriptures

to persuade them that no such suspicion could be held. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 17:4-10 ***And some of them were persuaded and joined themselves to Paul and Silas, and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews, jealous and recruiting certain wicked men from the marketplaces and stirring up the mob, agitated the city; and having gone to Jason's house they sought to bring them out to the people. Not finding them, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers, crying, "These who have upset the world have come here also, whom Jason has received; and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And they stirred up the crowd and the rulers when they heard these things; and after they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they released them. But the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berea; who, arriving, went into the synagogue of the Jews.***

He calls them *devout* [Σεβομένους[1]] *Greeks*, who, although they were from the Jews, nevertheless spoke Greek: devout because they observed the law; or proselytes of the Jews who were from the Greeks.

Acts 17:11-13 ***These, however, were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the message with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, including a number of respectable Greek women and not a few men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned***

that the word of God had also been proclaimed by Paul in Berea, they came there as well, stirring up the crowds.

"*These, however, were more noble*." He says "*more noble*" instead of "more fair-minded." Not that they examined them as unbelievers, or were testing the Scriptures (for they were already believers), but as if unaware with the tradition of the ancient prophets, and therefore made stronger in faith, when they examined the Scriptures and found the works of the Lord in the flesh to be in agreement with the words of the ancients. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 17:14-15 ***Immediately then the brothers sent Paul away, to go as far as the sea. But Silas and Timothy stayed there. Those who were appointing Paul led him as far as Athens, and having given instructions to Silas and Timothy that they should come to him as quickly as possible, they departed.***

By a certain arrangement the Apostle fled here, not seized by fear, but both wishing to increase his preaching and to extinguish the madness by which they were afflicted.

On the slander written against a philosopher's public reputation in Athens, and of Paul's preaching and piety.

Acts 17:16-17 ***While they were waiting for Paul in Athens, his spirit was stirred within him as he observed the city full of idols. He argued in the synagogue with the Jews and those devoutly inclined, and every day in the marketplace with all who happened to be there.***

"*was stirred within him*." Here he does not say anger, nor indignation; for anger and indignation are far from grace. What

then is this, "*was stirred within him* "? Instead of "he was aroused," he does not bear it, but is softened, as elsewhere he says, "There was a frustration among them," and what follows. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 17:18 ***Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also opposed him, and some said, "What does this seed-picker want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities," because he was proclaiming Jesus and the resurrection.***

The *Epicureans* held that the universe is spontaneous and composed of atoms; the *Stoics*, that it is a body undergoing fire. Some of these, extremely conceited about their knowledge, senselessly mocking the divine Paul with the taunt, "*What does this seed-picker want to say*?" (for they called the seed-picker a little and lowly bird, fit neither for food nor for pleasure, accustomed to pick up seeds cast down in the crossroads, and therefore named the lowly and unworthy); and they said he was *a proclaimer of foreign divinities*, since he preached *Jesus and the resurrection*. For they even supposed the resurrection to be some kind of god, as they were accustomed to worship female deities; for they called their gods demons.

Acts 17:19-21 ***They seized him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying: "May we learn what this new teaching that you are proclaiming is? For you are introducing something strange into our ears. We wish, then, to know what these things are intended to be; Athenians and the resident foreigners do not attend to anything else but to tell or to hear something new."***

They brought him, he says, *to the Areopagus*, not so much to learn, but so that he might be punished, where the courts deal with homicide. The place was called the Areopagus because Ares, as they say, there administered justice concerning adultery. Pagos means a high place; for that tribunal was on some hill. Therefore the local or village rulers are by some called Pagarchs[2]. *[LETTER OF ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM, CHAPTER 45]*

> **Acts 17:22-23** ***Standing Paul in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, in every way I see you to be more religiously superstitious. For as I passed through and observed your objects of worship, I found also an altar on which was inscribed, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore the one whom you ignorantly worship, him I proclaim to you."***

Two reasons are given for the inscription on the altar in Athens, "*TO AN UNKNOWN GOD*." For some say that when the Athenians sent Philippides to the Lacedaemonians about an alliance, at the time the Persians marched on Greece, a phantom of Pan appeared to him on Mount Parthenion and blamed the Athenians for neglecting him and worshiping other gods, and promised to help. Having therefore prevailed, they erected a temple to him and built that altar. And, so that they might be on guard for fear that the same thing happen again at another time, having presented some god unknown to them, they set up that altar inscribed "*TO AN UNKNOWN GOD*," saying that if perhaps some other were unknown to them, let this one be raised among them in his honor, so that he might be favorable to them, in case he would not be worshiped when unknown. Others say that a plague once fell upon the Athenians and consumed them to such an extent that they could not even bear their finest garments. Therefore those

who were believed to be their gods were of no help. Realizing then that perhaps there was a god whom they themselves had left unhonored, the sender of the plague, they, fearing a new altar, and inscribing it, "*TO AN UNKNOWN GOD*," and having sacrificed, were immediately healed. Paul therefore says that this Christ Jesus is the God of all, although he also declared it to them. And the entire inscription of the altar is this: To the gods of Asia and Europe and Libya, to a god unknown and foreign. *[LETTER OF ISIDORUS OF PELUSIUM, CHAPTER 45]*

<u>Acts 17:24-26a</u> ***God, who made the world and all that is in it, who, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in hand-made temples, nor is served by human hands as if in need of anything, but gives to all life and breath and everything; and from one blood he has made every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.***

For fear that they should think that God proclaimed by him was one of the common gods, he adds in correction: "He *does not dwell in hand-made temples*." For indeed he dwells in temples, but not in these, rather in the human soul. For he is not said to dwell in the temple of Jerusalem, but to operate there. Nor was he worshiped among the Jews by the hands of men, but with the mind: for he did not so desire those things as if he were in need. For he says, "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls? Or shall I drink the blood of goats?" (Ps. 50:13) and the following.

<u>Acts 17:26a-29</u> ***Having appointed the times and the boundaries of their habitation, to seek God if perhaps they might feel for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, For we***

too are his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divine is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by art and human design.

"*Having appointed the times*." He says, "Having appointed *to seek God*"; but he did not appoint this for all time, rather for appointed times, showing that they did not find him when they did not seek him now. For since when they sought, they did not find, he shows that he was revealed in such a way, as if toward something to be grasped in the middle; for the heaven was not here, but elsewhere. Nor was he in this time, but in another; so that it is possible to find him at every season and at every fixed point; for therefore he arranged it, so that he might be hindered neither by place nor by time. For this indeed contributed most of all to their belief, that the heaven is everywhere, that it stands in every time. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

And this is what he says, "*though he is not far from each one of us*." For he is near to all as being everywhere in the inhabited world; and he is so near that without him one cannot live. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*For in him we live and move and have our being*." Just as, in a bodily example, it is impossible to be unaware of the air poured everywhere, and of its not being far from any one of us, indeed even being within us, so likewise is the creator God of all. For from him is our being, our activity, our not perishing. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Then he even brings in a use for them from Aratus, one of their poets, in the construction of his own discourse. "*For we too are his offspring*," he says. And this passage he takes about the Creator himself, although some say that this was said about Zeus, not meaning the same as that Zeus, but saying that this expression most properly fits him. For something has been said and is directed to him, but the Greeks do not know this, for they have

conceived these things of another, just as also the phrase "To the Unknown God," and something different. But Paul says that we are of the race of God, not as those say, but in another sense of mind, that is, relatives, nearest, as one might say, dwellers nearby or neighbors. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

> **Acts 17:30-34** ***Having observed the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, having provided proof to all by raising him from the dead. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you about this again." And so Paul went out from among them. But some men joined him and believed, among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.***

"*Having observed the times of ignorance*," and the following. He does not mean that none are punished for these things, but that none of those who wish to repent do so. For he is not speaking of those who have died, but of those to whom he is giving commands. "He does not demand an account from you," he says, concerning your former years of ignorance. He did not say, moreover, he overlooked, or he permitted, but, "He has overlooked," that is, he did not seek punishment, although they are worthy of punishment. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 17.

1. Σεβομένους In biblical texts, this specific form often refers to "God-fearers" or "devout" individuals, specifically Gentiles who worshipped the

God of Israel and frequented synagogues without fully converting to Judaism.

2. In history and administration, the word Pagarch refers to an important Byzantine office, primarily in Egypt.

CHAPTER 18

About Aquila and Priscilla, the disobedience of the Corinthians, and the revelation to Paul of God's favorable intention toward them by foreknowledge; in which also concerning Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, who believed along with certain others and was baptized, and that when a disturbance arose in Corinth Paul withdrew, and having come to Ephesus and engaged in discussion he departed; concerning Apollos, a man learned and faithful.

Acts 18:1-8 ***After these things he departed from Athens and came to Corinth. And finding a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had newly come from Italy, and Priscilla his wife (because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to depart from Rome), he came to them, and because they were of the same trade he stayed with them and worked; for they were tentmakers by trade. He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. And when they opposed and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own head; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." And he left there and entered into the house of a certain man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his***

household; and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

"*Your blood be on your own head*." This is what Paul says, casting off his garments, so that one should fear not only the word but the deed as well. Therefore, having said this more strongly, "*Your blood be on your own head*," he departs from them. And he means this: each of those who apostatize from Christ, who is Life, seems to slay himself, passing from life into death, in a sense pouring out his own blood by the slaughter he brings upon himself. Therefore he says, "Instead of slaying yourselves through unbelief, you promise justice for this very thing, while I am innocent." From this it is clear that the one who slays himself is punished as a murderer by God. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 18:9-16 ***And the Lord spoke by night in a vision to Paul, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for there are many people in this city who belong to me." He remained there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews rose up together against Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, "This man persuades people to worship God contrary to the law." As Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked lawbreaking, O Jews, I would, according to reason, bear with you; but if it is questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." And he drove them away from the tribunal.***

"*by night in a vision*." It should be noted that Paul saw the Lord Jesus by a dream. Therefore, he himself said: Did I not see Jesus our Lord? Whether he saw Jesus in a dream, or saw him while

awake, there is no difference; moreover he appeared to him also by day. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 18:17 ***Seizing Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue, all the Greeks beat him before the judgment seat, and none of this mattered to Gallio.***

Either for this reason they struck *Sosthenes*, since he too was more attached to Paul, as also Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue; or they had been driven to such a degree of madness that, having failed in their purpose, instead of striking Paul they struck Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue. Or: for this reason they struck him, because they were more eager to kill Paul, and Sosthenes prevented them. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 18:18 ***Paul, after remaining for several more days and taking leave of the brothers, sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila; having his head shaved at Cenchreae, for he had a vow.***

Paul again went down to *Syria*, and with him *Priscilla and Aquila*, having had *his head shaved*; for to have the head shaved according to a *vow* was Jewish. And a sacrifice was also to be offered, which, however, did not take place after Sosthenes had been blinded; for the law was already being set aside, since they were restrained by conscience. *[DIDYMUS]*

Acts 18:19-21 ***They arrived at Ephesus, and he left those men there; he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they urged him to stay longer, he did not consent, but taking leave and saying,***

"If God wills, I shall return to you again," he set sail from Ephesus.

He left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, he said, [and did this with good reason], as if they were teaching there. For since they had been associated with him for so long, they had learned very many things; yet he had not been able to dissuade them from the Jewish custom. For this reason, when Paul was a prophet, and knew that he would return, he did not simply promise that he would return, but added, *if God wills*. Clearly teaching us not to promise anything about the future except by adding, *if God wills*. For no one knows what a coming day will bring forth. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 18:22-28 ***And having gone down to Caesarea, and having gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch, and after spending some time went out, passing successively through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Now there was a Jew named Apollos, of Alexandria by birth, an eloquent man, strong in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he only knew the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him aside and explained the way to him more accurately. And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to receive him; who, on coming, greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.***

Some say that this Apollo is the same as Apelles, the bishop of the Corinthians, about whom it is said elsewhere: "I planted, Apollos

watered." (1 Cor. 3:6) The man with the two names then either altered one of the names afterwards, or otherwise. *[DIDYMUS]*

"*though he only knew the baptism of John*." It is worth asking how, if he knew only John's baptism, he could therefore be filled with the Spirit. For the Spirit was not given in that way. And if those who came after him needed John's baptism, much more would this man have needed it. What then is one to say? For he did not simply place both in succession. It therefore seems that this man is one of the one hundred and twenty who were baptized after the apostles. If not that, what happened in the case of Cornelius may have happened here as well. But he is not baptized. When this matter is examined precisely, it seems this is not the case, since he too ought to have been baptized. For the other twelve knew nothing precisely, not even about Jesus. It is plausible then that he was baptized. And if those of John, after the baptism, again baptized, then it was necessary for the disciples to do the same. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 18.

1. Σεβομένους In biblical texts, this specific form often refers to "God-fearers" or "devout" individuals, specifically Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel and frequented synagogues without fully converting to Judaism.

2. In history and administration, the word Pagarch refers to an important Byzantine office, primarily in Egypt.

CHAPTER 19

Acts 19:1-3 ***And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples he said unto them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you***

believed?" They replied to him, "No, we did not even hear that there is a Holy Spirit." He said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism."

Knowing only *John's baptism*. It is worth asking how, if he knew only John's baptism, he nevertheless possessed the Spirit; for the Spirit was not given in that way. And if those who came after him needed the baptism of Christ, much more would he have needed it. What then is one to say? For he did not simply set both side by side. It seems, therefore, that he was one of the one hundred and twenty who were baptized after the apostles. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 19:4-8 ***Paul said: John indeed baptized a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Christ Jesus. When they heard, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; they spoke in tongues and prophesied. They were all men, about twelve in number. Entering the synagogue, he spoke boldly, for three months conversing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God.***

From John's *baptism* he prophesies, and he leads them to understand that this was John's baptism. From this point it is shown that John's baptism was incomplete. For he did not say that it was forgiveness, but that it was *of repentance*. Then, having been baptized into *the name of the Lord*, he says that by the laying on of Paul's *hands* they immediately receive *the Spirit*. But this he did not see; for it is invisible. Yet grace gave some perceptible proof of that operation. And one spoke in the Persian tongue, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such language; he uttered speech. And this was revealed to those

outside, that the Spirit was in the one who uttered, God showing that this is of the highest authority. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 19:9-10 ***When some became hardened and disobedient, criticizing the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, conversing daily in the school of a certain tyrant. This continued for two years; so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.***

"*criticizing the way*." Either "*the Way*" means Christ, or it means the true faith. For this is *the Way* that leads into the kingdom of heaven. From this also he instructs us to separate those who believe in him from those who blaspheme the Son of God.

Acts 19:11-12 ***God performed not random miracles but through the hands of Paul; so that from his body they would bring handkerchiefs or aprons to the sick and be freed from their diseases, and the evil spirits would come out of them.***

"*handkerchiefs or aprons*." I think both are linen-like; but the handkerchiefs are placed upon the head, while the aprons are held in the hands by those unable to wear handkerchiefs, such as those who wear secondary garments or sleaves to wipe away the moistures of the face, for example sweat, spittle, tears, and the like. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 19:13-17 ***Some of the roaming Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke over those who had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "We appeal you by Jesus whom Paul proclaims." Now there were seven sons of***

Sceva, a Jewish high priest, who were doing this. But the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was leapt upon them, subdued them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

"*Some of the roaming Jewish exorcists*." This statement shows that they did not, like exorcists believing in Jesus, adjure unclean spirits in the name of the Lord, but were testing them: wherefore also, since they were not faithful, as the *evil spirit* says, they shortly paid the penalty of their foolishness. For the spirit exposed them, and wholly exposed their deceit, moved by anger: as when one placed in extreme dangers is attacked by some enemy, and all wrath is poured out upon him.

Acts 19:18-31 ***Many of those who had believed came, confessing and proclaiming their deeds. And a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them publicly; and they counted up the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. Therefore the word of the Lord grew and prevailed. But after these things were ended, Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there I must also see Rome." And sending into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed some time in Asia. Now about that season there arose a great disturbance concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines for Artemis, brought no small***

profit to the craftsmen; whom he having gathered with the workers of like occupation, said, "Men, you know that from this craft we have our wealth; and you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number, saying that they are no gods which are made with hands. And not only is this trade endangered, but the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her greatness may be brought to nothing, whom all Asia and the world worship." When they heard this they were filled with anger and cried out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. The disciples therefore would not allow Paul to enter into the theater; and some of the Asiarchs who were his friends sent to him and entreated him not to venture into the theater. But some cried one thing and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together. And they drew Alexander out of the crowd, the Jews pushing him forward. And Alexander motioning with his hand would have made his defense to the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, a great outcry arose all together against both Paul and Alexander, and the assembly confused, cried out for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

"*confessing and proclaiming their deeds*." It is necessary for every faithful person to confess his own sins, and to turn away by reproving himself, so as no longer to do the same things, in order that he may be justified according to the saying: "You first confess your sins, so that you may be justified." (James 5:16) It should also be noted in what follows that although their *magical books*

were valuable, like the finest possessions of those who live in the world, those who believed in Christ did not sell them but *burned them*; for, although there were others there who wished to acquire such books, first so that no one might share in the soul-destroying influence that comes from them, and secondly so that no one might obtain anything on account of such a cause. For just as gain from fornication was forbidden to be offered to God, so neither did the apostles judge it right or acceptable that the money from this source should be placed at their feet. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 19:32-40 ***Then the secretary quieted the crowd and said, "Men of Ephesus, for who is there among people who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the caretaker of the great Artemis and of the image sent down from heaven? Since these things are indisputable, it is proper that you remain calm and do nothing rash. For you have brought these men neither as sacrilegious nor as blasphemers of our goddess. If then Demetrius and those craftsmen with him have any complaint against anyone, they are citizens and have recourse to the courts and to the magistrates; let them bring accusations against one another. But if you seek anything further, it will be settled in the lawful assembly. For even we are in danger of being accused of causing an uprising about what is happening today, without any one person being at fault, about which we will be able to give an account concerning this uproar. And having said these things he dismissed the assembly."***

The scribe shows how great the superstition of the Ephesians was, both in adorning the temple of *Artemis* and in honoring her *image*, which they and the Diopetes said to be fallen from Zeus. For they all called that shell the Diopetes, sent from heaven by Zeus, either

a fallen statue that had come down from the sky, or the Palladium, as the Greeks invented in order to astonish the more gullible, which they supposed to have been fashioned from above by Zeus and not by humans. *[AMMONIUS]*

The Diopetes, of the temple of Zeus, that is, the round-shaped one. Or it was likewise called another sanctuary among them. But instead of "temple-keeper" [Νεωκόρον] he says "temple-servant" [ἱερόδουλόν]; to "sweep" is the act of cleansing, from which also temple-keeper, the one who tends the temple, is so called, that is, he who sweeps the temple. *[AMMONIUS]*

"*and have recourse to the courts and to the magistrates*." There was a class of judges in Asia called the magistrates, of humble status, who in some cases judged the poor and market-people; therefore they were called magistrates, just as there are public prosecutors in certain cities. The proconsuls, however, listened to cases concerning the rich or crimes. The term magistrates is also applied to advocates, from the word ἀγορεύειν, that is, "to speak publicly." *[AMMONIUS]*

CHAPTER 20

The period of Paul, in which matters concerning the death and restoration of Eutychus by prayer in Troas. And his pastoral exhortation to the elders in Ephesus; in which Paul's voyage from Ephesus as far as Caesarea of Palestine.

Acts 20:1-16 ***After the noise had ceased, Paul called the disciples and encouraged them; having embraced them, he set out to go into Macedonia. After passing through those regions and exhorting them with many words, he came into Greece, and having stayed three months, when a plot was formed against him by the Jews intending to***

sail him away to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. Sopater son of Pyrrhus of Berea accompanied him, and Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, and Gaius of Derbe and Timothy, and the Asians Tychicus and Trophimus. These, having gone on ahead, waited for us at Troas; we sailed away after the days of Unleavened Bread from Philippi, and came to them at Troas and stayed with them for five days, where we remained seven days. On the first day of the week, when we had assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart the next day, and prolonged his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were assembled. A certain young man named Eutychus, who was sitting on the windowsill, being overcome by sleep while Paul prolonged his discourse, fell into a deep sleep and fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and fell on him and embracing him said, Do not be troubled, for his life is in him. Then he went up and broke bread and ate; and having conversed a long while until dawn, he departed. They brought the boy alive, and they were not a little comforted. But we went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. When he met us at Assos we took him on board and came to Mitylene; from there sailing on the next day we came opposite Chios; on the next day we touched at Samos; on the following day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he might not spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying if possible to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

"*Gaius of Derbe and Timothy*." Of the others he also mentions their hometowns, making them more recognizable in that way. But

concerning Timothy he was content with the name alone, because he himself, through his character and virtue, provided the identification, and because previously he had invoked his memory of his homeland in passages where he said: “He came down to Derbe and Lystra, and behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy.” If *of Derbe* is now an ethnic name rather than a proper name, perhaps he has just recalled his homeland.

> **Acts 20:17-21** ***Having sent for the elders of the church from Miletus to come to Ephesus, when they came to him he said to them, You know from the first day on which I set foot in Asia how I lived among you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and tears and with trials that came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, seriously testifying both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.***

Since custom commonly escapes notice, especially in the New Testament calling bishops [ἐπισκόπους] *elders* [πρεσβυτέρους] and elders bishops, note this here, also from the Epistle to Titus, and moreover to the Philippians, and from the First to Timothy. From Acts therefore there is grounds to be convinced about this. For it is written therefore: From Miletus having sent to Ephesus, he called *the elders of the church* together, and did not say the bishops.

Then he adds: "In which the Holy Spirit appointed you bishops [ἐπισκόπους] to shepherd the church." (Acts 20:28) And from the Epistle to Titus: "You shall appoint elders [πρεσβυτέρους] in every city, as I directed you." (Titus 1:5) To those who are in Philippi, “with the bishops and deacons.” (Philip. 1:1) I think that this should also be assumed from the earlier passage addressed to

Timothy. For he says, “If anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. Therefore, a bishop must be blameless.” (1 Tim. 3:1-2) And after a short time: "Let a widow be counted who is not less than sixty years old." (1 Tim. 5:9) For indeed there is a rule of the church, setting forth what such a one ought to be.

"*with all humility and tears*." Here he shows a character of teaching: the generous, the tireless, and the sympathetic; for he suffered for those who were perishing, for those who were being destroyed; and humility; and not simply, but, he says, *with all humility*; (for there are many kinds of humility, in word, in deed, toward rulers, toward those ruled;) and speaking what was beneficial; for there were things that ought not to be learned. For just as to hide something is from envy, so to tell them everything is from folly. And for this reason he added, "*anything that was profitable*," signifying that he did not only speak, but also taught.

> **Acts 20:22-27** ***And now behold, bound by the Spirit I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. Yet I make no account of my life as precious to myself, in order to complete my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold, I know that you will no longer see my face, you all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom; for I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.***

Here, in the passage “bound,” it is necessary to insert, so that either the mind be such: *I am going to Jerusalem*, having foreknowledge through the *Spirit* of the things that will be; and yet I go as a prisoner. Then, for fear that anyone suppose it is

bondage or compulsion, and to show that he departs willingly, he says that "*in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me*." "*I am innocent*," he says, "*of the blood of all men*," if you, being drowsy, perish because of the murderer of souls; for of the teacher, he says, *For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God*. Therefore he who does not speak is responsible for their blood, that is, for their slaughter. He therefore shows that even those who do not act would be responsible for that same blood; and on that account he exhorts them.

> **Acts 20:28-32** ***Be careful for yourselves and for all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops, to shepherd the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night and day to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all the sanctified.***

He commands two things of the teachers. For it is not only profitable to correct others, nor to attend only to one's own affairs; for such a person is self-loving. It should be noted that those whom he calls elders here, he likewise calls *bishops*, that is, because the elders need to supervise the spiritual flocks of the Church, so that no one be weak in faith, no one go hungry or thirsty if he needs rebuke and restoration. He therefore calls bishops the ones who are truly bishops. *[AMMONIUS]*

<u>Acts 20:33-38</u> ***I desired neither silver nor gold nor clothing; you yourselves know that these hands served my needs and those who were with me. I have shown you in everything that therefore one must labor to aid the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Having said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. A great weeping arose from everyone, and, falling upon Paul's neck, they kissed him, grieving especially at the word he had spoken that they would see his face no more. They escorted him to the ship.***

"*silver or gold*," and the following. The root of evils, greed, is destroyed. For he does not simply say, I did not receive, but, *Nor did I desire*. Then he shows that true almsgiving ought to come from one's own labors to the needy, since it is not good to give from another's. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Then he says that this matter also has use and arrangement through *the words of the Lord*, which is not now found in Scripture; and perhaps the apostles handed it down orally. From which one could reason: to be said in other words, signaling this. He does not say that it is evil to receive and give away, but that it is better not *to receive*. For this is compassion toward the weak. For to give what belongs to others is not even honorable. Therefore, the first step is to abandon one's own; the second, to provide the necessities for oneself; the third, even for others; the fourth, him who preaches, and therefore has the power to receive, to admonish to receive. He therefore is by far better situated in poverty. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

CHAPTER 21

Acts 21:1-4 ***When we were separated from them and set out, we sailed straight to Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara; and finding a ship bound for Phoenicia we boarded and sailed away. Putting in at Cyprus and leaving it to port, we sailed to Syria, and came down to Tyre, for the ship was unloading its cargo there. Finding the disciples, we stayed with them seven days, who, by the Spirit, were telling Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.***

This is what happened: Not finding a ship bound for Caesarea but *for Phoenicia*, I boarded that one; and we sailed on to *Cyprus* and allowed *Syria* to remain. For the phrase "*leaving it to port*" is not simple, it has been said, but that they were in no hurry to approach Syria. So they came to Lycia, and leaving Cyprus, sailed to Tyre; for there the *ship* unloaded *its cargo*. He does not say that he made the urging through the Spirit, but that, being guided *by the Spirit*, they knew. For he did not merely foretell dangers to him, but that he must not go up, sparing him. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 21:5-9 ***When we had completed those days, we departed and went on our way, accompanied by all who were seeing us off, with their wives and children, as far as outside the city; and kneeling on the shore we prayed and embraced one another, and we boarded the ship, and they returned to their homes. We completed the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais, and having greeted the brothers we stayed with them one day. On the next day we went on and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Now he had four virgin daughters who prophesied.***

"*completed those days*." The verb "completed" [ἐξαρτίσαι] is used in place of πληρῶσαι.[1] For after the days had been completed, that is, after the days of unleavened bread, they came to Troas five days later. It should be noted that the daughters of the deacon *Philip* were prophetesses, so that it is possible for one who partakes in service to minister in marriages. Note also that his prophetic *daughters* were *virgins*, and that they practiced this more out of holiness, so that they were deemed worthy of prophecy. Therefore it is clear that virginity was a matter of great importance to them as well. For if it had not been a matter of great importance, the author would not have added that they were also virgins. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Agabus's prophecy concerning what would happen to Paul in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10-14 ***Now as they were staying for many days, a certain prophet came down from Judea named Agabus; and coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own hands and feet and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit: 'The man whose belt this is will be bound like this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and will be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.'" When we heard these things, both we and the locals begged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."***

Agabus, the one who long ago foretold the famine. But the troubling thing is that they will hand him over into the hands of Gentiles. And see that when Paul heard that he would suffer countless terrible things, then he was hastening. And Agabus did

not say that they would bind Paul, so as not to seem to speak from an agreement; but the man whose belt this is.[2]

Exhortation of James to Paul, concerning not permitting the Hebrews to be circumcised.

Acts 21:15-25 ***After those days, having made preparations, we went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us, bringing along with us a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to be entertained. When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. And after he had greeted them, he related one by one what things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard it, they glorified God, and said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who believe, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to apostatize from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: there are four men with us who have a vow upon themselves. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that the things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we have written, deciding that they should abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality."***

"*having made preparations*." That is, having taken things for the journey. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

"*You see, brother, how many thousands*." They advise, they do not impose this upon those around James; therefore they persuade. For it was condescension of economy, not of legislation. Therefore this was not a cutting off of the preaching, but an economy. For those in Jerusalem who believed from among the Jews wished still to observe the legal customs.

"*Take these and be purified with them*." They counsel him to make his defense by deed, not by word. They therefore say this: Provide the offerings prescribed by the law on their behalf, so that you may remove suspicion, and show that not only do you not teach outside the law, but that you yourself also observe what is in the law. And for fear that he should say, "If the Gentiles learn this, they will be scandalized," they therefore add: "As for the Gentile believers, we wrote, he says, commanding them to observe nothing of that sort." Just as then we imposed upon them, although preaching to Jews, so also, you preaching to the Gentiles, cooperate with us: for this is condescension, do not suspect anything. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

And to do this in Jerusalem is attainable. Do this then here, so that it may be possible for you to do that abroad. Then he was persuaded by them, and he shaved himself and fulfilled all the Jewish rites. *[AMMONIUS]*

Concerning the disturbance raised against Paul in Jerusalem, so that the chief captain rescues him from the crowd. In which the condition of Paul regarding himself and his calling to the apostleship. Concerning what Ananias said to Paul in Damascus, and also concerning an apparition and the voice of God once made to him in the temple; that Paul was about to be beaten on account of these things, having said that "I am a Roman," he was released.

Acts 21:26-38 ***Then Paul, having taken the men and been purified with them for the day, entered the temple, announcing the completion of the days of purification until the offering should be presented for each one of them. But as the seven days were about to be completed, some Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help, this is the man who everywhere teaches against our people and the law and this place, and besides has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place." For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. The whole city was stirred and there was a tumult; and they seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. As they were seeking to kill him, tidings reached the commander of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion, who, taking soldiers and centurions from them, ran down upon them. And when those who were beating Paul saw the commander and the soldiers, they ceased beating him. Then the commander came near and took hold of him and ordered him to be bound with two chains, and was inquiring who he was and what he had done. But some were crying out one thing and some another in the crowd. And because he could not determine the truth on account of the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the barracks. When he reached the steps, it happened that he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the multitude of the people was following, crying out, "Seize him!" As they were about to lead him into the barracks, Paul said to the commander, "May I speak to you?" He said, "Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian who before these***

days stirred up and led into the wilderness four thousand men of the Sicarii?"

"*Seize him*." It is the custom among the Jews to use this cry against the righteous, as also against the Lord, "*Seize him*," instead of "Raise him up from the living." Others say it therefore, that is, those who speak according to our Roman usage: "Cast him into the pits." *[AMMONIUS]*

"*Are you not the Egyptian*." This Egyptian was a certain man, a maker of new movements and a rebel and a deceiver and a sorcerer. And since the Devil wished to make Paul a sharer in the crimes that belonged to him, just as at that time against Christ, he stirred him up to perform wonders among the Jews. And when the chiliarch says, "*Are you not the Egyptian*," he immediately removed him from this suspicion, and from the nation, and from the religion. For elsewhere he calls himself legitimately of Christ. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

The Sicarii are called robbers who make use of small swords, in size somewhat like the daggers of the Persians, but curved and similar to the dagger [σίκαις] called by the Romans, from which the title was taken by those who robbed. Others said they were some sect among the Jews. *[JOSEPHUS]*

For there are three general sects among the Jews: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes; these lead a more devout life, being lovers of one another and temperate; therefore they are called Essenes, that is, holy; others called them Sicarii, that is, zealots. *[ORIGEN]*

Translator notes for Acts chapter 21.

1. The terms πληρῶσαι and ἐξαρτίσαι originate from Hellenistic/Biblical Greek literature and mean full completion, fulfillment, or perfect preparation. "πληρῶσαι" (from πληρόω) refers to filling, completing, or

fulfilling a mission, while "ἐξαρτίσαι" (from ἐξαρτίζω) means to equip fully, to make someone capable, or to complete a process.

2. The text of the Patrologia Graeca has no commentary on Acts 21:10-14, so I used the comments found in the Pharmakeides version.

CHAPTER 22

Acts 21:39-40-22:1-29 ***Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now make to you. And when they heard that I had spoken to them out of the Hebrew dialect, they kept the more silence. And he said: I am a man, a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia; but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, strictly instructed according to the law of our fathers, being zealous toward God, as you all are this day. And I persecuted this way to death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women; as also the high priest can bear me witness, and all the elders; from whom also I received letters to the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound to Jerusalem, that they might be punished. And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and came near to Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And I answered, Who are you, Lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you persecute. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they did not hear the voice of him that spoke to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told to you of all things which are appointed for you to do. And when I could not see for the***

glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came to me; and he stood, and said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight. And at that same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, and to see the just One, and to hear the voice of his mouth; for you shall be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why you remain? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that when I was returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and I saw him saying to me, Hurry, and you get quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive your testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on you; and when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting to his death, and guarding the garments of them that slew him. And he said to me, Depart: for I will send you far therefore to the Gentiles. And they gave forth their voices, and cried out, and cast off their garments, and threw dust into the air; and the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the barracks, and ordered that he should be examined with scourging, that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. But as they bound him with the straps, Paul said to the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, What will you do? for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said to him, Tell me, are you a Roman? And he said, Yes. And the chief captain answered, I bought this citizenship

with much money. But Paul said, But I was born a citizen. Immediately then they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain, also being afraid, because he recognized that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

How does Paul say, "*I am a man, a Jew, a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, not of an insignificant city*," and shortly after, "*If a man is a Roman and uncondemned*," and the following? How, then, having said these things, and not at another time but at that very moment when he spoke those words, and to the very same hearers, does he say: "*Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned*"? And when the tribune asks, "*Are you a Roman*?" he demonstrated that he was a Roman, and not merely saying it casually, but by appeal, because "*I was born a citizen*." From this above all it is clear that he spoke the truth. For if at one time he said he was from *Tarsus* and at another time a Roman, or spoke that to some hearers and this to others, one might reasonably say that the claim of being a Roman was perhaps fabricated, thinking to deceive those present into believing that he was from Tarsus. But he, saying that he was from Tarsus, if he were not most conscious of the truth for himself, would not have dared to declare to the same men that he was a Roman, and then to be about to be beaten. For it is clear that by denying him he not only did not free him from the blows, but made the punishment even more severe. And he faithfully related also the slanders against him by the Jews, that he is a deceiver, and a liar, and a sorcerer, which above all Paul strove to put away. Moreover the tribune, if he had not been convinced that he was a Roman, would not have ceased from whipping him, he would not have rescued him urgently from the Jews who were plotting against him. He would not have written on his behalf to Felix that he was a Roman, and that as a Roman he had been snatched from the plot of the Jews.

The Jews would not have brought him before the magistrates, inventing charges against him that did not exist, but from this very thing, if he lied in claiming to be a Roman, beginning their slander with that and concerning the other matters they would seem also to be telling the truth. But how is it possible to be both from Tarsus and a Roman? Hear then the Philippians, when they dragged Paul and Silas before the rulers into the marketplace, since the Pythoness' slave-girl was released, what do they say? that "These men are disturbing our city, being Jews, and proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to practice, being Romans." (Acts 16:20-21) Do you see the Philippians calling themselves Romans? Therefore nothing prevents Paul from being both from Tarsus and a Roman. For since it seemed a thing of honor to be called a Roman, and he who was called by this name was thought to acquire something more than others in terms of glory, many people, both collectively by cities and some individually, were eager to acquire this title for themselves. And while each was named after his native land, whichever it happened to be, indicating the place that bore him, he was also called a Roman, ascribing this title to himself as a mark of dignity. Therefore, at any rate, Paul also, when they were about to dishonor and strike him, brought forward this name, seeking to strike them with fear and to check them in their daring act. But they say: Let these things be so. How is it possible for Paul to have been born both in Tarsus and in Rome? For it has been shown to be in no way impossible to have been born in Tarsus and yet be called a Roman, having acquired this title for himself by way of some honor. And that he was also born in Tarsus and in Rome, how is that possible? And where does Paul say that he was born in Rome? "*Yes*," he says. For when the centurion said, "*I bought this citizenship with much money*," Paul says, "I was born a citizen." And what does this mean? For he did not say, I was born in Rome, but he indicates it from what follows. For when the centurion mentioned not Rome, but the Roman citizenship, he added, "*I was born a citizen*." Not

in Rome (for the centurion did not say that he had acquired a great sum), but in the Roman state and honor, just as he said he acquired. How then was he born in the Roman state, if he was not born in Rome? Because when his father acquired this honor, and by it being revered and celebrated, he himself was born to him. Therefore when he says, "*I was born a citizen*," he means: He has recently obtained the honor himself, having acquired it, while I bear the paternal glory and have shared in it. For this reason he says, "*I was born a citizen*."

And in another way. Paul was not lying in calling himself a Roman, although being a Jew, as he himself said a little earlier. For from Hadrian it happened that all were Romans. For those who were therefore esteemed to be called had then great privilege. He says these things so that, if he had been whipped, he would not become despised. For if they had scourged him, they would also have urged the matter and would have killed him. But now even if not for another reason, yet for this one not only did they not scourge him, but they also released him. Paul therefore asserts that his father was a Roman. For before Paul was born, Cilicia having become subject to the Romans, it was necessary that he too, being under them, be a Roman. But later he was bound in Jerusalem according to the prophecy. What then follows from this? Having loosened him, he led him before the Jews. Therefore it was not a falsehood. For the tribune feared, he says, having recognized that he is a Roman, that is, of the class of officials.

CHAPTER 23

What Paul suffered and said when he went down to the council, he both did and spoke straightforwardly.

Acts 22:30-23:1-5 ***But on the next day, wishing to determine with certainty what the accusations by the Jews***

were, he released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole council to assemble. And bringing Paul before them, Paul, gazing at the council, said, "Men, brothers, I have lived before God with a perfectly good conscience up to this day." But the high priest Ananias commanded those standing near him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you who have been puffed up! And do you sit to judge me according to the law, and command me to be struck contrary to the law?" Those who were standing nearby said, "Do you insult the high priest of God?" Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he is the high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

"*God will strike you, you who have been puffed up*." It is worth asking how the same speaker elsewhere says, "When condemned we bless, when persecuted we endure," (1 Cor. 4:12) whereas here, on the contrary, he not only condemns but also curses. And we say that these expressions are more a matter of boldness than of anger. For he did not wish to appear scornful toward the centurion. If he himself refrained from sparing the rod, as though about to be handed over to the Jews to be beaten by their servants, he would have made that man more brazen. But this is not, as some say, addressed to the child, but to the one who gave the command, for whom he immediately pleads. For knowing that one must also restrain righteous anger and hide rightful indignation, he speaks as if repenting: "*I did not know that he is the high priest*," although he knew.

For he said, "*And do you sit to judge me according to the law*." But he pretends an ignorance that does not harm, but is economical. For there is also a stronger use of frankness by way of handling. For often frankness at an inopportune time harmed the truth, but a timely handling accomplished the matter at hand. *[SEVERUS]*

"*I did not know, brothers*," and what follows. Some say that he did not know that he was the high priest, having returned after a long time, not being related to the Jews, and seeing him among many others; for the high priest was no longer obvious, many being present and different. Therefore, as not knowing, he reasonably defends himself as if there were an accusation, and bring forward, "*You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people*."

> **Acts 23:5-7** ***Knowing that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am being judged." When he had said this, a conflict arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the crowd was divided.***

Again he speaks in a human manner, and does not everywhere enjoy the benefit of grace. And at this time and after these things he wished to divide the multitude which was of one mind against him. And in this place he does not lie: since by his ancestors he was a Pharisee. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

> **Acts 23:8-9a** ***For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit. But the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry, and the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and argued, saying, "We find nothing mistaken in this man."***

The Sadducees, being arrogant, perhaps do not even know God. Therefore, they do not wish to believe in a resurrection. *But the Pharisees confess both*. And indeed there are three. How then does he say, "*both*"? Either because he calls spirit and angel one, or because the word does not speak only of two, which is what "both"

chiefly signifies, but also of three. Therefore one ought not from the outside to judge the writings of plain and unschooled fishermen with the exacting judgments of a scholar. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 23:9b-11 ***But if a spirit or an angel spoke to him, let us not fight against God. When there was a great disturbance, the centurion, fearing that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, ordered the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them and bring him into the barracks. And the next night the Lord, standing by him, said, "Take courage, Paul; for as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."***

"*If a spirit spoke to him*." The statement can be understood in two ways. For something is lacking to complete the sense so that it may be read therefore: If a spirit or an angel spoke to him, it is unclear, he says; or as the phrase must be taken from the Pharisees: If a spirit spoke to him or an angel, instead of "Behold, I speak about the resurrection," it is evident that the word about the resurrection was taught either by the Holy Spirit or by an angel. *[AMMONIUS]*

On the plot devised by the Jews against Paul, and their report of it to Lysias; in which it is related that Paul was sent by Lysias to the governor at Caesarea with a detachment of soldiers and scribes.

Acts 23:12-35 ***But when it became day, the Jews made a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty of those who had made this plot; and they came to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves by a curse not to eat or***

drink until we have killed Paul. Now therefore you, together with the council, give orders to the commander to bring him down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to examine the matter more exactly; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near you." When the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Bring this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to say to you." So the commander took him by the hand and withdrew privately and asked, "What is it that you have to tell me?" He said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you that you bring Paul down tomorrow to the council, as though they were going to investigate more closely about him; do not be persuaded by them. For there are more than forty men who are lying in wait for him from them, who have bound themselves by oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are now ready and are waiting for your consent." Then the commander dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this." And having called two of the centurions, he said, "Prepare two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, at the third hour of the night; and set beasts of burden ready, so that they may set Paul on them and convey him safely to Governor Felix." And he wrote a letter in this form: "Claudius Lysias to his Excellency Governor Felix, greetings. This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, when I came with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. I wished to know the charge for which they accused him, so

I brought him down to their council; and I found that he was accused about questions of their law, but had no charge deserving of death or imprisonment. When a plot against the man was made known to me, I sent him at once to you, and ordered the accusers to state before you what they had against him." The soldiers, according to their order, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris; and on the next day they left the horsemen to go with him and returned to the barracks. When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. When he had read it and inquired from what province he was, and had ascertained that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will hear you when your accusers arrive." And he ordered him to be kept in Herod's praetorium.

"*bound themselves*," that is, they declared themselves outside of faith in God, unless they did the things they boasted of. If then they lied about the promise, as indeed they lied, they are accursed; or if it even happened that they murdered, again as murderers they would have bound themselves, whether God, although the priests pretended otherwise. *[AMMONIUS]*

The binding is therefore to be understood in a double sense: one, as directed to God alone, in the manner of being unattainable by all or by many; the other, as imposed upon all creation and upon the holy incorporeal powers and alien to God, as assigned to the Devil, because of the alienation of the good in purity; in this way now also they subject themselves to the curse. We therefore think that this is often rightly spoken of as a curse [κατάθεμα]. For in truth such a thing is not appointed to God, but is rather appointed to the Devil, being subjected and condemned together with him.

CHAPTER 24

Tertullus's accusation against Paul, and his own defense before the governor.

Acts 24:1-21 ***Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a certain lecturer named Tertullus, who presented accusations against Paul to the governor. When he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, "We enjoy much peace through you and, because of your reforms for this nation, we accept you everywhere and always, most excellent Felix, with all gratitude. And so that I may not detain you further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary fairness. For we found this man a lethal fellow, stirring up rebellions among all the Jews throughout the world and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, who even tried to profane the temple, whom we seized; and you can examine him yourself concerning all these matters, if you are willing to learn the facts of which we accuse him." The Jews also joined in the charge, claiming that these things were so. But Paul, having made a sign with his hand to the governor, responded: "Since many years you have been a judge for this nation, and with a clear conscience I make my defense, being able to prove to you that not more than twelve days have passed since I went up to worship at Jerusalem; and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, neither in the synagogues nor in the city; nor can they prove to you the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets, having hope toward God, which these also themselves accept, that there shall be a resurrection of the righteous and the***

unrighteous. In this I also exercise my conscience to God and to men always. And I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings, and in these I was purified in the temple, not with a crowd or with chaos. Some Jews from Asia ought to be here before you and to make charges if they have anything against me. Or let these men themselves say what wrong they found when I stood before the council, unless it be for one voice that cried out among them against me, when I said, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you today.'"

"*But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect*." After calling him to be an apostle of Christ, saying that he served the Lord, the ancestral God, he shows there is one God of both the Old and the New Testaments, whom the prophets and the law proclaimed, whom Paul preached when he said, believing all that is written according to the law and the prophets. Inasmuch as Christ is here also introduced indirectly, yet previously by dwelling on the word of the resurrection, if these were labored over from the beginning. For once this was shown, it was easy to introduce also the matters concerning Christ, namely that he rose. *[DIDYMUS]*

Acts 24:22-26 ***Felix postponed them, knowing more precisely the matters concerning the route, saying, "When Lysias the chiliarch goes down I will investigate the things concerning you," and ordering the centurion to keep him guarded and to give him liberty and not to prevent any of his own men from attending him. After some days Felix came with Drusilla his own wife, who was a Jewess, and summoned Paul and listened to him concerning faith in Christ Jesus. As he discoursed with him about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment,***

Felix became afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient opportunity I will summon you." And hoping that money would be given him by Paul, he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

"*Felix postponed them, knowing more precisely*." It should be noted that Felix knew of the faith, having been thoroughly instructed from the Old Testament concerning Christ, and he did not release Paul out of favor for the Jews, or perhaps because of bribery, as the following account showed. It was also evident that he had a wife who was a Jewess, from whom these matters were continually heard. This woman, contrary to the law, had been joined to him, being a Jewess married to a Greek. Perhaps she was originally Jewish, but by marriage to him became a Hellenist; therefore she also declared to him her own faith, persuading him to become a faithless husband. *[AMMONIUS]*

CHAPTER 25

On the succession of Felix, and the promotion of Festus, and concerning the examination of Paul before him and his appeal.

Acts 24:27-25:1-12 ***But after two years had been fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to ingratiate himself with the Jews, Felix left Paul bound. Festus therefore, having set out from the district, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea; and the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews appeared before him against Paul, and begged him, asking a favor against him, that he would send him to Jerusalem, making an ambush to kill him on the way. Festus therefore replied that Paul should be kept in Caesarea, and that he himself intended to depart shortly. "You***

therefore," he said, "who are able among you, if there is anything wrong in the man, accuse him." And having spent among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; and on the next day, sitting upon the judgment-seat, he ordered Paul to be brought. When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing many and serious charges which they could not prove, while Paul made his defense, saying that "I have committed no offense either against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar." But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Do you desire to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried about these things before me?" Paul said, "I stand before Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself very well know. If then I am an offender and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if there is nothing of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, after conferring with his council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go."

"*I appeal to Caesar*," said Paul, wishing to escape the hands of the Jews, that is, in Rome I desire to go to the emperor and there to be tried. "I appeal to you," he says. For the name "Caesar," in Roman usage, signifies "king," just as by a common name all kings of the Romans are called Caesar, though indeed these are not their private names. For at the time of Christ's birth the ruling Caesar was called Emperor; he suffered under Tiberius Caesar. And the blessed Paul is executed in Rome under Nero Caesar.

Agrippa and Bernice present, and the accusations against Paul. In which Paul's defense concerning his lawful religion and his calling to the

Acts 25:13-27 ***After some days Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. And as they stayed there many days, Festus related to the king the matters concerning Paul, saying, "There is a man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom when I came to Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders of the Jews appeared and asked for judgment against him. To them I answered that it is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man up before the accused has his accusers face to face and is given opportunity to make defense concerning the charge. So when they had assembled here, I made no delay, but sitting on the judgment seat I commanded the man to be brought. When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such things as I supposed, but had certain disputes with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. Being perplexed in the examination about these things, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning them. But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Caesar, I commanded him to be kept until I should send him to Caesar. Agrippa said to Festus, 'I would also like to hear the man myself.' 'Tomorrow,' he said, 'you shall hear him.' So on the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice came with great spectacle and entered into the auditorium, together with the chief captains and principal men of the city, and Festus having given orders, Paul was brought in. And Festus said, 'King Agrippa and all men who are present with us, you see this man about whom all the multitude of the Jews informed me in both Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death; and as***

he himself appealed to the Emperor I decided to send him. Concerning whom I have nothing certain to write to the master; therefore I brought him forth before you, and especially before you, O king Agrippa, that, after the examination has taken place, I may have something to write. For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without specifying the charges against him.'

"*Agrippa the king*." That is, Agrippa was exercising the rank of king in the provinces, and therefore was addressed as king; or perhaps he himself was king of the eastern parts, Nero being ruler of the western, and while Nero was in Rome. *[AMMONIUS]*

"*appealed to the Emperor*." He calls the king "Emperor" in a habitual way, as he does Caesar; and addressing him as master he says, "*Concerning whom I have nothing certain to write to the master*."

CHAPTER 26

Acts 26:1-11 ***Agrippa then said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul, stretching out his hand, made his defense: "Concerning all the things for which I am accused by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am to make my defense before you today, especially since you are well acquainted with all the customs and controversies among the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. All the Jews who know my life from my youth and my earlier years in my nation know, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest party of our religion. And now I stand on trial because of the hope of***

the promise made by God to our fathers, which our nation of twelve tribes sincerely serves night and day and hopes to attain. It is with respect to this hope that I am accused by the Jews, King. Why is it considered incredible among you if God raises the dead? I myself thought it necessary to do many things opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and this I also did in Jerusalem. I locked many of the saints in prison obtaining authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my vote. I frequently punished them in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme; and in my obsession against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

"*Why is it considered incredible among you if God raises the dead*?" He proposes two lines of argument about the resurrection: one derived from the prophets, and he does not dismiss the prophet, but rather the glory of the Jews, and another stronger one drawn from events, that Christ was reported to him as having risen from the dead. And he constructs this latter also from reasoning, recounting beforehand his former zeal. First argument: "*Why is it considered incredible among you if God raises the dead*?" and another: Would such glory have existed, unless they had been raised again in these doctrines? And when he introduced this, who would not have accepted the statement? "For this heresy," he says, "I am accused; and this is pressed upon them. On account of this they pray, on account of this they worship, that they may obtain this. And this I proclaim." *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

<u>Acts 26:12-18</u> ***As I was traveling to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road, a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shone around me and those who were traveling with me; and when we all fell to the ground***

I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the rods." And I said, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for to this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you; delivering you from the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

"*brighter than the sun*." He then likens it to that which among sensible things is most luminous; since that light could not be equated with the light of Jesus, which is far greater, he speaks in this way, so that human hearing may receive it, and says that that light surpasses the brilliance of the sun. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 26:19 ***Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.***

A *heavenly vision* [Ὀπτασία][1] is the pure sight that transcends man. What a person in the flesh is unable to see, unless his eyes are revealed to him, cannot be seen. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 26:20-23 ***But to those in Damascus first and then in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea and to the Gentiles I preached to repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me while I was in the temple and attempted to kill me. But by the help which is from God I have stood to this***

day, witnessing both to small and great, saying nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that Christ, if he was to suffer, and if he was to be first from the resurrection of the dead, was destined to proclaim light to both the people and the Gentiles.

"*saying nothing except what the prophets said*." For fear that he himself be thought the teacher of this, he cites the prophets and Moses, saying, "*that Christ, if he was to suffer, and if he was to be first from the resurrection of the dead*," and what follows. But the phrase "if" (εἰ), instead of "that" (ὅτι), means "is." *Moses*, he said, declared that Christ would be the first to undergo resurrection. For he first rose here and no longer dies: for although some others had been raised either by him or by the disciples, and likewise by the prophets, they died again, awaiting the universal resurrection. *[CHRYSOSTOM]*

Acts 26:24-32 ***While he was defending himself, Festus cried out in a loud voice, "You are mad, Paul; your great learning is driving you to madness." But Paul said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but I am speaking words of sober truth. For the king is familiar with these matters, to whom I am also speaking openly; for I am persuaded that nothing of these things has escaped his notice, since this has not been done in a corner. Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you do believe." And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian." Paul said, "I would pray to God even for a little while, but also in length of days, not only you but all who hear me today, may become such as I am, except for these chains." Then the king, and the governor, and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them rose up, and as they were going away they spoke to one another,***

saying, "This man does nothing deserving of death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Since he was always conversing with the king, as if Festus had suffered something, and seeing the boldness, from anger and outrage, he says, "*You are mad*." But Paul explains the reason for which he turned his speech to the king. Then, showing that this doctrine had become everywhere in the inhabited world, he added: "*this has not been done in a corner*," speaking about the cross and the resurrection of Christ. In short, that is, with few words, in brief sayings, in a short teaching, without much labor and continuous discussion. Wherefore Paul also fittingly says to him: "*I would pray to God even for a little while*," and the things that follow. For example, that it is my earnest desire that all should become Christians, and this is my prayer to God. Since I am ready both for many words and for few to preach the faith in Christ, and with work and labor, and immediately. For work and labor in teaching and preaching are in no way counted against me, but it is the same to me to work or not, and to spend much time in proclaiming or little, provided that I see some turning to Christ. He said these things while at once showing his own eagerness and zeal, and at the same time calling to that man, as if he wished both to hear more and to receive more instruction; not only would he not shrink from anything, but he was so ready, providing readiness itself, that he would even perform an act of prayer, if only he should obtain the object. The phrase "*even for a little while*," Agrippa?—he took instead of "almost," that is, of what was required to be small. But if anyone else, like you, Paul, discourses about divine and human matters, using spoken delivery rather than the wording or what is signified for the advantage of the speech, he put "*even for a little while but also in length of days*" instead of "in a few words in the contest of words," and also "in more," and he offered "I would wish you to become a Christian." So that he might say, "Both by

few words and by many words I would wish you to become a Christian." For the sake of everything I am ready to do all things for your salvation, not only for yours alone, but also for those associated with you.

"*except for these chains*." Not refraining from calling his chains his own, nor ashamed, he said this. For this indeed was to him, if anything else, worthy of glory and boast, but it looked to the opinion of those people, and yielded to their weakness: "may become," he says, "*such as I am, except for these chains*."

Translator notes for Acts chapter 26.

1. Ὀπτασία is a Greek feminine noun meaning "a vision," "supernatural appearance," or "apparition". Derived from ὀπτάνομαι ("to appear"), it refers to a sight or display seen while awake or asleep, frequently used in the Bible to describe heavenly visions, such as angels or divine revelations.

CHAPTER 27

Paul's voyage to Rome, full of very many and very great dangers. In it Paul's exhortation to those with him concerning the hope of salvation. Paul's shipwreck, how they were saved to the island of Melita and the things Paul performed there that were wonderful.

Acts 27:1-20 ***When it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to a centurion named Julius of the Augustan cohort. Embarking on an Adramyttian ship intending to sail to the regions along Asia, we were taken aboard, Aristarchus of Macedonia, a Thessalonian, being with us. And when we had come down to Sidon, the centurion treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care. From there, getting underway, we sailed under***

Cyprus because the winds were contrary; and having crossed the sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and put us on board it. Sailing slowly many days and barely making progress off Cnidus because the wind did not permit us, we sailed under Crete off Salmone, and with difficulty doubled it and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. Much time having been spent and the voyage already dangerous because the fast was now over, Paul advised them, saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will be attended with great loss, not only of the cargo and ship but also of our lives." But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the owner of the ship than by what was said by Paul. Since the harbor was not suitable for spending the winter, most were of the opinion to put out to sea from there and seek a place called Phoenix and winter there, a harbor of Crete lying toward the southwest and northwest. When the south wind blew softly, supposing they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed close along the shore of Crete. But not long after there struck down upon it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon; and when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way and were driven. Running under the shelter of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to get the boat under control; they lowered the small boat and brace up the ship, and fearing so as not to they should run aground on the Syrtis, they struck sail and so were driven. Being exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship; and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm lay on us; all hope that we would be saved was finally abandoned.

"*because the fast was now over*." Here the fast means that of the Jews. For after Pentecost he departed from there after a long time, as if to come to the parts of Crete almost in the *winter* itself. Behold, Paul now prophesies again, telling them that they would be shipwrecked. *[AMMONIUS]*

Even if the shipwreck did not occur to them with loss of *lives* according to his word. For this would have happened as far as the nature of the thing was concerned, if God had not preserved them. For through him he also caused those men to be saved. The shipwreck that took place, then, occurred because the season was bad, since the storm was great. The marvel is greater, that in such a season they were saved from the dangers, both the Apostle himself and through him the rest. Therefore he was not proved false.

"*But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the owner of the ship*." The centurion did not pay attention to what was said by Paul, being persuaded rather by those experienced in navigation, who were more inclined to prevail than by a passenger inexperienced in seamanship. And from this he teaches that the error is of judgment and not of chance. For that it is possible by nature to avoid danger, experience itself teaches not to plunge oneself down, since, as is beyond doubt, a thing carries danger, with fortune and fate lying asleep over what has gone before, or indeed awake yet unable to act against the deliberate choice of humans, by which they conduct and carry matters relating to themselves as they wish, as also those who traveled with Paul. For they acted according to choice, because immediately, having met a favorable wind, they gladly completed the voyage. *[AMMONIUS]*

It should be known that to say "*face the wind*" of a ship is not to be taken in the literal sense. For that expression applies only to a

person. Therefore one must not constantly interpret Scripture literally. *[AMMONIUS]*

Acts 27:21-41 ***While there was great hunger then, Paul stood in their midst and said, "Men, it was necessary, when you obeyed me not to sail from Crete, that you should have gained relief from this upset and this loss. Now I encourage you to take heart, for none of your lives will be lost, only the ship. For last night there stood by me the angel of God who I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar, and behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' Therefore take heart, men; for I believe God that it will be just as it has been spoken to me. We must run aground on some island." But when the fourteenth night had come, while we were drifting in the Adriatic, at midnight the sailors supposed they could bring it to some land; and casting four anchors from the stern, they wished for day to come. But the sailors were seeking to escape out of the ship, and had let down the boat into the sea, pretending they would cast anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and let it fall off. Until daybreak Paul was encouraging all to take food, saying, "This is the fourteenth day that you wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Therefore I insist you to take food; for this is for your survival, for not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." Having said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God before them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged and themselves also took food. We were in all two hundred and seventy-six souls in the ship. And when they had***

eaten enough, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea. When day came they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a certain bay having a beach into which they planned, if they could, to run the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, loosening the rudder ropes; and hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the front end stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

"*and behold, God has granted you all*." Therefore the idea that things are governed by fate or chance is shown to be false. For if they had not been saved through Paul, all would have been doomed to perish on the ship, this being a gift from God to honor the righteous man. And therefore sometimes the ungodly live because of the righteous, and there are occasions when the opposite happens, and before his time the ungodly man perishes because of his own wickedness, as is said: Do not be overly wicked, nor become hard, for fear that you die in your season. (Eccles. 7:17)

But when he said, "*Unless these stay in the ship, you cannot be saved*," Paul spoke wisely, so as to hold them and not let the prophecy fail. Therefore when they saw that their lack of resolve had put them in danger, then they began to obey him. For if they had complied under the notion of fate, although they were Gentiles, having ignored the counsel of the holy man they would have permitted the sailors to depart. *[AMMONIUS]*

"*Therefore I insist you to take food*." Paul urges them to partake of food, and he himself partakes first, persuading not by words but by deed.

"*For this*," he says, "*is for your survival*," that is, to eat, in case you perish through hunger. For they had no concern for food, since

the danger was not about those present. From where then did it reveal to them that the number had increased among those sailing? It was fitting for them to ask the reason for which they sail, and to learn everything.

CHAPTER 28

Acts 27:44-45-28:1-10 ***The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners, for fear that any swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, prevented them from carrying out their intent, and commanded those who could swim, having thrown off their clothes, to jump first onto the land, and the rest on boards or on pieces from the ship; and so all were brought safely to shore. And when they were safe, we learned that the island was called Melita. The natives showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and received us all because of the rain and the cold. As Paul gathered a bundle of sticks and placed them on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said among themselves, "Certainly this man is a murderer, whom, though he has been saved from the sea, Justice has not permitted to live." But he shook the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They expected that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead; but when they had waited and observed nothing unusual happening to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. In the neighborhood of that place there was an estate belonging to Publius, the first man of the island, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously for three days. It happened that Publius's father was lying sick of fever and an infectious intestinal inflammation; Paul entered in, prayed, and laying his***

hands on him healed him. After this had taken place, the rest on the island who had diseases came and were cured; and they honored us with many marks of respect, and when we set sail they furnished the supplies we needed.

"*The soldiers planned*." Again from this it is shown that Paul had been favored, for although some wished to kill him so that the prophecy about Paul might not fail, the centurion did not allow them to be killed in order to save Paul.

"*a viper, driven out by the heat*." The viper, having fastened onto the apostle's hand and not finding the cavity of sin, immediately sprang away and drove itself against the fire, as if collecting a penalty for itself, because it struck with its body something that belonged to no one. But we fear wild beasts, since we do not have the full armor of virtue. *[THEODORET Q,18 in Gen.]*

Therefore when the Barbarians saw this and the certain death escaping them, they thought him to be *a god*, having the custom, making everything marvelous, to consider as a god; just as they used to call the old gods, either because of some greater strength they exhibited among themselves, as was Heracles; or because by magic they astounded those about them, as was Simon in Samaria. *[AMMONIUS]*

As Paul journeyed from Melita to Rome.

<u>Acts 28:11-16</u> ***After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island, it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the Twin Gods. Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day a south wind sprang up, and on the following day we came to Puteoli. There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The***

brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

"*the figurehead of the Twin Gods*." It was always customary in the ships of Alexandria, especially near the bow, to have such inscriptions on both the starboard and the port sides. And since it was natural, in that era of prevailing idolatry, for the Twin Gods to be depicted on the ship, it followed that they were considered foreign, that is, idolaters. Concerning this Isaiah also said: They shall be cast forth in a foreign ship; they shall take up their habitation over the sea. (Isa. 11:14) *[CYRIL]*

"*as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns*." Some places are noted outside Rome, one of which is said, with some probability, to have a statue of Appius and to be called his tribute, just as to this day the images of kings among the Romans are called tributes; the places called the taverns refer mysteriously to certain inns or shelters or to the use of taverns, so named in the Roman language. *[ISIDORE]*

On Paul's discussion with the Jews in Rome.

Acts 28:17-24 ***And it came to pass that after three days he called together the leading men of the Jews; and when they had come together he said to them, "Men, brethren, I have done nothing against the people or against the customs of our fathers, being delivered bound from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, after they had examined me, wished to release me, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews opposed,***

I was limited to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason I called for you to see and to speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." And they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor did any of the brethren who came report or speak any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." Having arranged a day, many came to him into the lodging, to whom he explained, testifying the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning until evening. And some were persuaded by the things spoken, but others disbelieved.

Knowing that it was altogether inappropriate to be tried, and especially before unbelievers, Paul defends himself about both matters, so that their reports might not be anticipated. For this reason, he says, I wished you to see me, so that no one might accuse anything falsely. And he mentions the things present, that, indeed, wishing to avoid their hands, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not as inflicting evils on others, but fleeing evils myself.

"*for concerning this sect*," and the following. Before he arrived. Paul was in Rome, the Jews had been commanded not to receive the preaching concerning Christ, and not only they alone, but also Jews everywhere in the world. How is this clear? We find in the books of the ancients that the priests and scribes and elders dwelling in Jerusalem, having written letters, sent them throughout the nations to the Jews everywhere, disapproving the teaching about Christ as foreign to God, and ordering by letters that it not be received. This, indeed, seems to be what the prophecy of Isaiah also means when it says: "Woe to the land, wings of ships beyond the rivers of Cush, sending captives by sea, and clay letters upon the water." (Isa. 18:1-2) By this he indicates that even

beyond the land of the Ethiopians and the ends of the earth the sound of wickedness concerning those dwelling in Judea went forth like ships flying, and their apostles bearing clay letters, sailing over the waters, and filling the sea, ran throughout the whole world, slandering the word concerning our Savior. It is still the custom among the Jews to call "apostles" the circular letters brought to them by their leaders. *[EUSEBIUS]*

> **<u>Acts 28:25-31</u>** ***But being at odds with one another they separated, Paul saying one word that The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, Go to this people and say, You will hear with hearing and will not understand, and seeing you will see and will not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and they have closed their eyes; for fear that they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn back, and I should heal them. Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they also will listen. And he remained there two whole years in his own rented lodging, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness without hindrance.***

"*The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet*," and the following. To those who call him the minister of the Father, Paul here gives a severe rebuke concerning the Holy Spirit. For concerning the Lord seated on a high and exalted throne, whom Isaiah saw, therefore speaks the Holy Spirit. For He is of the same essence as the Father and the Son, and shares the same power[1]. And this utterance prepares the prophet's words as if voiced by God concerning those things which pertain to Jesus, since the

people heard the words of Jesus and did not understand, and seeing the wondrous works done by him did not see. For turning the saying toward a future time, he indicates the reference of the prophecies to later times. Consider, however, the precision regarding the Spirit. He did not say, “And you will not look,” but rather, “*and seeing you will see and will not perceive*.” Nor, that you will not hear, but that you will hear and will not understand. They first denied themselves, stopping their ears, closing their eyes, and hardening their heart. For not only did they not hear, but they heard with difficulty. And they did this, he says, for fear that perhaps I should turn back and heal them, indicating their malice and deliberate turning away. And he says this, drawing it out and provoking, and showing that if they should turn back, he would heal them.

It should be known that Luke relates up to this point concerning the blessed Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, having written the book at that time, and knowing the following events least of all. Nor did he set down the account of his martyrdom in the book. For having left him there, Luke and Aristarchus went out. Eusebius[2], however, recorded the later times exactly: that under Nero, Paul having once more defended himself, was sent back to the ministry of preaching, was released to Caesar, and preached for another ten years. But when Nero arrived at the height of madness, a slaughter was raised against the apostles.

Having been sent again, Paul in the thirtieth and sixth year of the saving Passion, and in the thirteenth of his own, made testimony by the sword with his head cut off. Therefore from the nineteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and the second year of the saving Passion from which he began to preach the Gospel, until the twenty-second of the same Tiberius, four years. And the years of Gaius likewise four. Again the years of Claudius fourteen, whom Nero succeeding in the thirteenth year of his reign put the Apostle to death. Therefore the whole time of Paul's preaching is twenty-one

years; and another two years which he spent in prison at Caesarea. In addition again, the earlier two years in Rome, and the last ten years, so that all the years from his calling until his end are thirty-five. From the saving Passion thirty-six. For after the Lord's ascension, after certain few days, the apostles appointed Stephen and those with him to the ministry. Then we immediately find Stephen stoned, and Paul consenting to the murder. Who shortly afterwards rushed to Damascus to destroy the saints there. In the midst of the road his calling came to him from God, so that that year might be spent a little. Immediately he began to preach, taking hold in the nineteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and is completed in the thirteenth year of Nero, his head having been cut off by the sword.

Translator notes for Acts chapter 28.

1. The specific language Oecumenius used, linking the Spirit's essence directly to the Father and Son, was solidified during the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. This council expanded on the earlier Nicene Creed to explicitly state that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord, the giver of life... who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified."

2. Eusebius, Church History 2.22